00085342

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-400 023.

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018

RUSSIA

BY

SIR DONALD MACKENZIE WALLACE
K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O.

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

85342

WITH MAPS

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1912

00085342

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PREFACE

THE first edition of this work, published early in January, 1877, contained the concentrated results of my studies during an uninterrupted residence of six years in Russia—from the beginning of 1870 to the end of 1875. Since that time I have spent in the European and Central-Asian provinces, at different periods, two or three years more; and in the intervals I have endeavoured to keep in touch with the progress of events. My observations thus extend over a period of forty years.

When I began, in 1905, to prepare for publication the results of my more recent observations and researches, my intention was to write an entirely new work under the title of "Russia in the Twentieth Century"; but I soon perceived that it would be impossible to explain clearly the actual state of things without referring constantly to events of the past, and that I should be obliged to embody in the new work a large portion of the old one, which had been long out of print. The portion to be embodied grew rapidly to such proportions that, in the course of a few weeks, I began to ask myself whether it would not be better simply to recast and complete my old material. With a view to deciding the question, I prepared a list of the principal changes which had taken place during the previous quarter of a century, and when I had marshalled them in logical order, I recognised that they were neither so numerous nor so important as I had supposed. Certainly

there had been much progress, but it had been nearly all on the old lines. Everywhere I perceived continuity and evolution; nowhere could I discover radical changes and new departures. In the central and local administration the reactionary policy of the latter half of Alexander II.'s reign had been steadily maintained; the revolutionary movement had waxed and waned, but its aims were essentially the same as of old; the Church had remained in its usual somnolent condition; a grave agricultural crisis affecting landed proprietors and peasants had begun, but it was merely a development of a state of things which I had previously described; the manufacturing industry had made gigantic strides, but they were all in the direction which the most competent observers had predicted; in foreign policy the old principles of guiding the natural expansive forces along the lines of least resistance, seeking to reach warm-water ports, and pegging out territorial claims for the future, were persistently followed. No doubt there were pretty clear indications of more radical changes to come, but these changes must belong to the future, and it is merely with the past and the present that a writer who has no pretensions to being a prophet has to deal.

Under these circumstances it seemed to me advisable to adopt a middle course. Instead of writing an entirely new work, I determined to prepare a much extended and amplified edition of the old one, retaining such information about the past as seemed to me of permanent value, and at the same time meeting as far as possible the requirements of those who wish to know the present condition of the country.

In accordance with this view I revised, rearranged, and supplemented the old material in the light of subsequent events, and I added five entirely new chapters—three on

the revolutionary movement, which has come into prominence since 1877; one on the industrial progress, with which the more recent phase of the revolutionary movement was closely connected; and one on the main lines of the present situation as it appeared to me at the moment of going to press.

In the present edition I have carefully revised the whole on the lines laid down in 1905, and brought it up to date, paying special attention to the rise and development of parliamentary institutions which must exercise a great influence on the future destinies of the country.

LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1912.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
1.	TRAVELLING IN RUSSIA	1
2.	IN THE NORTHERN FORESTS	7
3.	VOLUNTARY EXILE	37
4.	THE VILLAGE PRIEST	51
5.	A MEDICAL CONSULTATION	72
6.	A PEASANT FAMILY OF THE OLD TYPE	88
7.	THE PEASANTRY OF THE NORTH	101
8.	THE MIR, OR VILLAGE COMMUNITY	120
9.	HOW THE COMMUNE HAS BEEN PRESERVED, AND WHAT IT IS TO EFFECT IN THE FUTURE	142
10.	FINNISH AND TARTAR VILLAGES	152
11.	LORD NOVGOROD THE GREAT	169
12.	THE TOWNS AND THE MERCANTILE CLASSES	182
13.	THE PASTORAL TRIBES OF THE STEPPE	202
14.	THE MONGOL OR TARTAR DOMINATION	223
15.	THE COSSACKS	233
16.	FOREIGN COLONISTS ON THE STEPPE	246
17.	AMONG THE HERETICS	258
18.	THE DISSENTERS	273
19.	CHURCH AND STATE	293
20.	THE NOBLESSE	305
21.	LANDED PROPRIETORS OF THE OLD SCHOOL	323
22.	PROPRIETORS OF THE MODERN SCHOOL	345
23.	SOCIAL CLASSES	365
24.	THE IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE OFFICIALS	370
25.	MOSCOW AND THE SLAVOPHILS	394
26.	ST. PETERSBURG AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCE	417
27.	THE CRIMEAN WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES	437
28.	THE SERFS	462

CHAPTER		PAGE
29.	THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS	489
30.	THE LANDED PROPRIETORS SINCE THE EMANCIPATION	515
31.	THE EMANCIPATED PEASANTRY	528
32.	THE ZEMSTVO AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT	558
33.	THE REFORM OF THE LAW COURTS	580
34.	REVOLUTIONARY NIHILISM AND THE REACTION	605
35.	SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA, REVOLUTIONARY AGITATION, AND TERRORISM	625
36.	INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS AND THE PROLETARIAT	655
37.	A NEW PHASE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT	672
38.	THE JAPANESE WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES	689
39.	THE IMPERIAL DUMA	726
40.	TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND FOREIGN POLICY	743
	INDEX	771

RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

TRAVELLING IN RUSSIA

Of course, travelling in Russia is no longer what it was. During the last half-century a vast network of railways has been constructed, and one can now travel in a comfortable first-class carriage from Berlin to St. Petersburg or Moscow, and thence to Odessa, Sebastopol, the Lower Volga, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern Siberia, Vladivostock, or Port Arthur. Two or three times a week there are direct trains from St. Petersburg or Moscow to Vladivostock, and Port Arthur and Pekin have thereby been brought within about ten days of London. And it must be admitted that on the main lines the passengers have not much to complain of. The carriages are decidedly better than in England, and in winter they are kept warm by small iron stoves, assisted by double windows and double doors—a very necessary precaution in a land where the thermometer often descends to 30° below zero. The trains never attain, it is true, a high rate of speed—so at least English and Americans think—but then we must remember that Russians are rarely in a hurry, and like to have frequent opportunities of eating and drinking. In Russia time it *not* money; if it were, nearly all the subjects of the Tsar would always have a large stock of ready money on hand, and would often have great difficulty in spending it. In reality, be it parenthetically remarked, a Russian with a superabundance of ready money is a phenomenon rarely met with in real life.

In conveying passengers at the rate of from fifteen to forty miles an hour, the railway companies do at least all that they promise; but in one very important respect they do not always strictly fulfil their engagements. The traveller takes a ticket for a certain town, and on arriving at what

he imagines to be his destination, he may find merely a railway station surrounded by fields. On making inquiries, he may discover, to his disappointment, that the station is by no means identical with the town bearing the same name, and that the railway has fallen several miles short of fulfilling the bargain, as he understood the terms of the contract. Indeed, it might almost be said that as a general rule railways in Russia, like camel drivers in certain Eastern countries, studiously avoid the towns. This seems at first a strange fact. We can readily understand that, as travellers in Arabia tell us, towns are shunned by the wild Bedouin, enamoured of tent life and nomadic habits, and afraid of falling a prey to extortionate officials; but surely civil engineers and railway contractors in Russia have no such dread of brick and mortar. The true reason, I suspect, is that land within or immediately beyond the municipal barrier is relatively dear, and that the railways, being completely beyond the invigorating influence of healthy competition, can afford to look upon the comfort and convenience of passengers as a secondary consideration. Gradually, it is true, this state of things is being improved by private initiative. As the railways refuse to come to the towns, the towns are extending towards the railways, and already some prophets are found bold enough to predict that in the course of time those long, new, straggling streets, without an inhabited *hinterland*, which at present try so severely the springs of the rickety droshkis, will be properly paved and kept in decent repair. For my own part, I confess I am a little sceptical with regard to this prediction, and I can only use a favourite expression of the Russian peasants—*daï Bog!* God grant it may be so!

It is but fair to state that in one celebrated instance neither engineers nor railway contractors were directly to blame. From St. Petersburg to Moscow the locomotive runs for a distance of 400 miles, almost as "the crow" is supposed to fly, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. For twelve weary hours the passenger in the express train looks out on forest and morass, and rarely catches sight of human habitation. Only once he perceives in the distance what may be called a town; it is Tver which has been thus

favoured, not because it is a place of importance, but simply because it happened to be near the bee-line. And why was the railway constructed in this extraordinary fashion? For the best of all reasons—because the Tsar so ordered it. When the preliminary survey was being made, Nicholas I. learned that the officers entrusted with the task—and the Minister of Ways and Roads in the number—were being influenced more by personal than technical considerations, and he determined to cut the Gordian knot in true Imperial style. When the Minister laid before him the map with the intention of explaining the proposed route, he took a ruler, drew a straight line from the one terminus to the other, and remarked in a tone that precluded all discussion, "You will construct the line so!" And the line was so constructed—remaining to all future ages, like St. Petersburg and the Pyramids, a magnificent monument of autocratic power.

Formerly this well-known incident was often cited in whispered philippics to illustrate the evils of the autocratic form of government. Imperial whims, it was said, override grave economic considerations. In recent years, however, a change seems to have taken place in public opinion, and some people now assert that this so-called Imperial whim was an act of far-seeing policy. As by far the greater part of the goods and passengers are carried the whole length of the line, it is well that the line should be as short as possible, and that branch lines should be constructed to the towns lying to the right and left. Evidently there is a good deal to be said in favour of this view.

In the development of the railway system there has been another disturbing cause, which is not likely to occur to the English mind. In England, individuals and companies habitually act according to their private interests, and the State interferes as little as possible; private initiative does as it pleases, unless the authorities can prove that important bad consequences will necessarily result. In Russia, the *onus probandi* lies on the other side; private initiative is allowed to do nothing until it gives guarantees against all possible bad consequences. When any great enterprise is projected, the first question is—"How will this new scheme

affect the interests of the State?" Thus, when the course of a new railway has to be determined, the military authorities are among the first to be consulted, and their opinion has a great influence on the ultimate decision. The natural consequence is that the railway map of Russia presents to the eye of the strategist much that is quite unintelligible to the ordinary observer—a fact that will become apparent even to the uninitiated as soon as a war breaks out in Eastern Europe. Russia is no longer what she was in the days of the Crimean campaign, when troops and stores had to be conveyed many hundreds of miles by the most primitive means of transport. At that time she had only 750 miles of railway; now she has more than 43,000 miles open, and new lines are being constructed.

The water communication has likewise in recent years been greatly improved. On the principal rivers there are now very good steamers. Unfortunately, the climate puts serious obstructions in the way of navigation. For nearly half of the year the rivers are covered with ice, and during a great part of the open season navigation is difficult. When the ice and snow melt, the rivers overflow their banks and lay a great part of the low-lying country under water, so that many villages can only be approached in boats; but very soon the flood subsides, and the water falls so rapidly that by midsummer the larger steamers have great difficulty in picking their way among the sandbanks. The Neva alone—that queen of northern rivers—has at all times a plentiful supply of water.

Besides the Neva, the river visited most frequently by the tourist is the Volga, which forms part of what may be called the Russian grand tour. Englishmen who wish to see something more than St. Petersburg and Moscow generally go by rail from the ancient capital to Nizhni-Novgorod, where they visit the great fair, and then get on board one of the Volga steamers. For those who have mastered the important fact that Russia is not a country of fine scenery, the voyage down the river is pleasant enough. The left bank is as flat as the banks of the Rhine below Cologne, but the right bank is high, occasionally well wooded, and not devoid of a certain tame picturesqueness. Early on the

second day the steamer reaches Kazan, once the capital of an independent Tartar khanate, and still containing a considerable Tartar population. Several *metchets* (as the Mahometan houses of prayer are here termed) with their diminutive minarets in the lower part of the town show that Islamism still survives, though the khanate was annexed to Muscovy more than three centuries and a half ago; but the town, as a whole, has a European rather than an Asiatic character. If any one visits it in the hope of getting "a glimpse of the East," he will be grievously disappointed, unless, indeed, he happen to be one of those imaginative tourists who always discover what they wish to see. And yet it must be admitted that, of all the towns on the route, Kazan is the most interesting. Though not Oriental, it has a peculiar character of its own, whilst all the others—Simbirsk, Samara, Saratov—are as uninteresting as Russian provincial towns commonly are. The full force and solemnity of that expression will be explained in the sequel.

Probably about sunrise on the third day something like a range of mountains will appear on the horizon. It may be well to say at once, to prevent disappointment, that in reality nothing worthy of the name of mountain is to be found in that part of the country. The nearest mountain range in that direction is the Caucasus, which is hundreds of miles distant, and consequently cannot by any possibility be seen from the deck of a steamer. The elevations in question are simply a low range of hills, called the Zhigulinskiya Gori. In Western Europe they would not attract much attention, but "in the kingdom of the blind," as the French proverb has it, "the one-eyed man is king"; and in a flat region like Eastern Russia these hills form a prominent feature. Though they have nothing of Alpine grandeur, yet their well-wooded slopes, coming down to the water's edge—especially when covered with the delicate tints of early spring, or the rich yellow and red of autumnal foliage—leave an impression on the memory not easily effaced.

On the whole—with all due deference to the opinions of my patriotic Russian friends—I must say that Volga scenery hardly repays the time, trouble ond expense which a voyage

from Nizhni to Tsaritsin demands. There are some pretty bits here and there, but they are "few and far between." A glass of the most exquisite wine diluted with a gallon of water makes a very insipid beverage. The deck of the steamer is generally much more interesting than the banks of the river. There one meets with curious travelling companions. The majority of the passengers are probably Russian peasants, who are always ready to chat freely without demanding a formal introduction, and to relate—with certain restrictions—to a new acquaintance the simple story of their lives. Often I have thus whiled away, when travelling up and down this great river, the weary hours both pleasantly and profitably, and have always been impressed with the peasant's homely common sense, good-natured kindliness, half-fatalistic resignation, and strong desire to learn something about foreign countries. This last peculiarity makes him question as well as communicate, and his questions, though sometimes apparently childish, are generally to the point.

Among the passengers are probably also some representatives of the various Finnish tribes inhabiting this part of the country; they may be interesting to the ethnologist who loves to study physiognomy, but they are far less sociable than the Russians. Nature seems to have made them silent and morose, whilst their conditions of life have made them shy and distrustful. The Tartar, on the other hand, is almost sure to be a lively and amusing companion. Most probably he is a pedlar or small trader of some kind. The bundle on which he reclines contains his stock-in-trade, composed, perhaps, of cotton printed goods and especially bright-coloured cotton handkerchiefs. He himself is enveloped in a capacious greasy *khalát*, or dressing-gown, and wears a fur cap, though the thermometer may be at 90° in the shade. The roguish twinkle in his small piercing eyes contrasts strongly with the sombre, stolid expression of the Finnish peasants sitting near him. He has much to relate about St. Petersburg, Moscow, and perhaps Astrakhan; but, like a genuine trader, he is very reticent regarding the mysteries of his own craft. Towards sunset he retires with his companions to some quiet spot on the deck to recite the

evening prayers. Here all the good Mahometans on board assemble and stroke their beards, kneel on their little strips of carpet and prostrate themselves, all keeping time as if they were performing some new kind of drill under the eye of a severe drill-sergeant.

If the voyage is made about the end of September, when the traders are returning home from the fair at Nizhni-Novgorod, the ethnologist will have a still better opportunity of study. He will then find not only representatives of the Finnish and Tartar races, but also Armenians, Circassians, Persians, Bokhariots, and other Orientals—a motley and picturesque but decidedly unsavoury cargo.

However great the ethnographical variety on board may be, the traveller will probably find that four days on the Volga are quite enough for all practical and æsthetic purposes. In that case, instead of going on to Astrakhan, he will quit the steamer at Tsaritsin. Here he will find a railway connecting the Volga and the Don. I say advisedly a railway, and not a train, because trains on this line are not very frequent. When I first visited the locality, forty years ago, there were only two a week, so that if you inadvertently missed one train you had to wait at least three days for the next. Prudent, nervous people preferred travelling by the road, for on the railway the strange jolts and mysterious creakings were very alarming. On the other hand, the pace was so slow that running off the rails would have been merely an amusing episode, and even a collision could scarcely have been attended with serious consequences. Happily, things are improving, even in this outlying part of the country; trains are now more frequent and go at a less funereal pace.

From Kalatch, on the Don, a steamer starts for Rostoff, which is situated near the mouth of the river. The navigation of the Don is much more difficult than that of the Volga. The river is extremely shallow, and the sandbanks are continually shifting, so that many times in the course of the day the steamer runs aground. Sometimes she is got off by simply reversing the engines, but not unfrequently she sticks so fast that the engines have to be assisted. In the old times above referred to this was effected in a curious

way. The captain always gave a number of stalwart Cossacks a free passage on condition that they should give him the assistance he required; and as soon as the ship stuck fast, he ordered them to jump overboard with a stout hawser and haul her off! The task was not a pleasant one, especially as the poor fellows could not afterwards change their clothes; but the order was always obeyed, with alacrity and without grumbling. Cossacks, it would seem, have no personal acquaintance with colds and rheumatism.

In the most approved manuals of geography the Don figures as one of the principal European rivers, and its length and breadth give it a right to be considered as such; but its depth in many parts is ludicrously out of proportion to its length and breadth. I remember one day seeing the captain of a large, flat-bottomed steamer slacken speed, to avoid running down a man on horseback who was attempting to cross his bows in the middle of the stream. Another day a not less characteristic incident happened. A Cossack passenger wished to be set down at a place where there was no pier, and on being informed that there was no means of landing him, coolly jumped overboard and walked ashore. This simple method of disembarking cannot, of course, be recommended to those who have no local knowledge regarding the exact position of sandbanks and deep pools.

Good serviceable fellows are those Cossacks who drag the steamer off the sandbanks, and they are often entertaining companions. Many of them can relate from their own experience, in plain, unvarnished style, stirring episodes of irregular warfare, and if they happen to be in a communicative mood they may divulge a few secrets regarding their simple, primitive commissariat system. Whether they are confidential or not, the traveller who knows the language will spend his time more profitably and pleasantly in chatting with them than in gazing listlessly at the uninteresting country through which he is passing.

Unfortunately, these Don steamers carry a large number of free passengers of another and more objectionable kind, who do not confine themselves to the deck, but unceremoniously find their way into the cabin and prevent thin-skinned travellers from sleeping. I know too little of natural

history to decide whether these agile, bloodthirsty parasites are of the same species as those which in England assist unofficially the Sanitary Commissioners by punishing uncleanliness; but I may say that their function in the system of created things is essentially the same, and they fulfil it with a zeal and energy beyond all praise. Possessing for my own part a happy immunity from their indelicate attentions, and being perfectly innocent of entomological curiosity, I might, had I been alone, have overlooked their existence, but I was constantly reminded of their presence by less happily constituted mortals, and the complaints of the sufferers received a curious official confirmation. On arriving at the end of the journey, I asked permission to spend the night on board, and I noticed that the captain acceded to my request with more readiness and warmth than I expected. Next morning the fact was fully explained. When I began to express my thanks for having been allowed to pass the night in a comfortable cabin, my host interrupted me with a good-natured laugh, and assured me that, on the contrary, he was under obligations to me. "You see," he said, assuming an air of mock gravity, "I have always on board a large body of light cavalry, and when I have all this part of the ship to myself they make a combined attack on me; whereas, when someone is sleeping close by, they divide their forces!"

On certain steamers on the Sea of Azov the privacy of the sleeping cabin is disturbed by still more objectionable intruders; I mean rats. During a voyage which I made on board the *Kertch,* these disagreeable visitors became so importunate in the lower regions of the vessel that the ladies obtained permission to sleep in the deck saloon. After this arrangement had been made, we unfortunate male passengers received redoubled attention from our tormentors. Awakened early one morning by the sensation of something running over me as I lay in my berth, I conceived a method of retaliation. It seemed to me possible that, in the event of another visit, I might, by seizing the proper moment, kick the rat up to the ceiling with such force as to produce concussion of the brain and instant death. Very soon I had an opportunity of putting my plan into execution. A

significant shaking of the little curtain at the foot of the berth showed that it was being used as a scaling ladder. I lay perfectly still, quite as much interested in the sport as if I had been waiting, rifle in hand, for big game. Soon the intruder peeped into my berth, looked cautiously around him, and then proceeded to walk stealthily across my feet. In an instant he was shot upwards. First was heard a sharp knock on the ceiling, and then a dull "thud" on the floor. The precise extent of the injuries inflicted I never discovered, for the victim had sufficient strength and presence of mind to effect his escape; and the gentleman at the other side of the cabin, who had been roused by the noise, protested against my repeating the experiment, on the ground that, though he was willing to take his own share of the intruders, he strongly objected to having other people's rats kicked into his berth.

On such occasions it is of no use to complain to the authorities. When I met the captain on deck I related to him what had happened, and protested vigorously against passengers being exposed to such annoyances. After listening to me patiently, he coolly replied, entirely overlooking my protestations, "Ah! I did better than that this morning; I allowed my rat to get under the blanket, and then smothered him!"

Railways and steamboats, even when their arrangements leave much to be desired, invariably effect a salutary revolution in hotel accommodation; but this revolution is of necessity gradual. Foreign hotel keepers must immigrate and give the example; suitable houses must be built; servants must be properly trained; and, above all, the native travellers must learn the usages of civilised society. In Russia this revolution is in progress, but still far from being complete. The cities where foreigners most do congregate —St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa—already possess hotels that will bear comparison with those of Western Europe, and some of the more important provincial towns can offer very respectable accommodation; but there is still much to be done before the West-European can travel with comfort even on the principal routes. Cleanliness, the first and most essential element of comfort, as we understand the term, is

still a rare commodity, and often cannot be procured at any price.

Even in good hotels, when they are of the genuine Russian type, there are certain things which, though not in themselves objectionable, strike a foreigner as peculiar. Thus, when you alight at such an hotel, you are expected to examine a considerable number of rooms, and to inquire about the respective prices. When you have fixed upon a suitable apartment, you will do well, if you wish to practise economy, to propose to the landlord considerably less than he demands; and you will generally find, if you have a talent for bargaining, that the rooms may be hired for somewhat less than the sum first stated. You must be careful, however, to leave no possibility of doubt as to the terms of the contract. Perhaps you assume that, as in taking a cab a horse is always supplied without special stipulation, so in hiring a bedroom the bargain includes a bed and the necessary appurtenances. Such an assumption will not always be justified. The landlord may perhaps give you a bedstead without extra charge, but if he be uncorrupted by foreign notions, he will certainly not spontaneously supply you with bed-linen, pillows, blankets, and towels. On the contrary, he will assume that you carry all these articles with you, and if you do not, you must pay for them.

This ancient custom has produced among Russians of the old school a kind of fastidiousness to which we are strangers. They strongly dislike using sheets, blankets, and towels which are in a certain sense public property, just as we should strongly object to putting on clothes which had been already worn by other people. And the feeling may be developed in people not Russian by birth. For my own part, I confess to having been conscious of a certain disagreeable feeling on returning in this respect to the usages of so-called civilised Europe.

The inconvenience of carrying about the essential articles of bedroom furniture is by no means so great as might be supposed. Bedrooms in Russia are always heated during cold weather, so that one light blanket, which may be used also as a railway rug, is quite sufficient; whilst sheets, pillow-cases, and towels take up little space in a portmanteau.

The most cumbrous object is the pillow, for air-cushions, having a disagreeable odour, are not well suited for the purpose. But Russians are accustomed to this encumbrance. In former days—as at the present time in those parts of the country where there are neither railways nor macadamised roads—people travelled in carts or carriages without springs, and in these instruments of torture a huge pile of cushions or pillows is necessary to avoid contusions and dislocations. On the railways, the jolts and shaking are not deadly enough to require such an antidote; but, even in unconservative Russia, customs outlive the conditions that created them; and at every railway station you may see men and women carrying about their pillows with them as we carry wraps. A genuine Russian merchant who loves comfort and respects tradition may travel without a portmanteau, but he considers his pillow as an indispensable *article de voyage*.

To return to the old-fashioned hotel. When you have completed the negotiations with the landlord, you will notice that, unless you have a servant with you, the waiter prepares to perform the duties of *valet de chambre*. Do not be surprised at his officiousness, which seems founded on the assumption that you are three-fourths paralysed. Formerly, every well-born Russian had a valet always in attendance, and never dreamed of doing for himself anything which could by any possibility be done for him. You notice that there is no bell in the room, and no mechanical means of communicating with the world below stairs. That is because the attendant is supposed to be always within call, and it is so much easier to shout than to get up and ring the bell.

In the good old times all this was quite natural. The well-born Russian had commonly a superabundance of domestic serfs, and there was no reason why one or two of them should not accompany their master when his Honour undertook a journey. An additional person in the *tarantass* did not increase the expense, and considerably diminished the unavoidable little inconveniences of travel. But times have changed. In 1861 the domestic serfs were emancipated by Imperial ukaz. Free servants demand wages; and on railways or steamers a single ticket does not include an

attendant. The present generation must therefore get through life with a more modest supply of valets, and must learn to do with its own hands much that used to be performed by serf labour. Still, a gentleman brought up in the old conditions cannot be expected to dress himself without assistance, and accordingly the waiter remains in your room to act as valet. Perhaps, too, in the early morning you may learn in an unpleasant way that other parts of the old system are not yet extinct. You may hear, for instance, resounding along the corridors such an order as—"Petrusha! Petrusha!! Stakán vodý!!!" ("Little Peter, little Peter, a glass of water!") shouted in a stentorian voice that would startle the Seven Sleepers.

When the toilet operations are completed, and you order tea—one always orders tea in Russia—you will be asked whether you have your own tea and sugar with you. If you are an experienced traveller you will be able to reply in the affirmative, for good tea can be bought only in certain well-known shops, and is rarely to be found in hotels. A huge, steaming tea-urn, called a *samovar*—etymologically, a "self-boiler"—will be brought in, and you will make your tea according to your taste. The tumbler, you know of course, is to be used as a cup, and when using it you must be careful not to cauterise the points of your fingers. If you should happen to have anything eatable or drinkable in your travelling basket, you need not hesitate to take it out at once, for the waiter will not feel at all aggrieved or astonished at your doing nothing "for the good of the house." The twenty or twenty-five kopeks that you pay for the samovar—tea-pot, tumbler, saucer, spoon, and slop-basin being included under the generic term *pribór*—frees you from all corkage and similar dues.

These and other remnants of old customs are now rapidly disappearing, and will, doubtless, in a very few years be things of the past—things to be picked up in out-of-the-way corners, and chronicled by social archæology; but they are still to be found in towns not unknown to Western Europe.

Many of these old customs, and especially the old method of travelling, may be studied in their pristine purity through-

out a great part of the country. Though railway construction has been pushed forward with great energy during the last fifty years, there are still vast regions where the ancient solitudes have never been disturbed by the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and roads have remained in their primitive condition. Even in the central provinces one may still travel hundreds of miles without ever encountering anything that recalls the name of Macadam.

If popular rumour is to be trusted, there is somewhere in the Highlands of Scotland, by the side of a turnpike, a large stone bearing the following doggerel inscription :—

> "If you had seen this road before it was made,
> You'd lift up your hands and bless General Wade."

Any educated Englishman reading this strange announcement would naturally remark that the first line of the couplet contains a logical contradiction, probably of Hibernian origin; but I have often thought, during my wanderings in Russia, that the expression, if not logically justifiable, might for the sake of vulgar convenience be legalised by a Permissive Bill. The truth is that, as a Frenchman might say, "there are roads and roads"—roads made and roads unmade, roads artificial and roads natural. Now, in Russia, roads are nearly all of the unmade, natural kind, and are so conservative in their nature that they have at the present day precisely the same appearance that they had many centuries ago. They have thus for imaginative minds something of what is called "the charm of historical association." The only perceptible change that takes place in them during a series of generations is that the ruts shift their position. When these become so deep that fore-wheels can no longer fathom them, it becomes necessary to begin making a new pair of ruts to the right or left of the old ones; and as the roads are commonly of gigantic breadth, there is no difficulty in finding a place for the operation. How the old ruts get filled up I cannot explain; but as I have rarely seen in any part of the country, except perhaps in the immediate vicinity of towns, a human being engaged in road repairing, I assume that beneficent Nature somehow accomplishes the task without human assistance, either by means of alluvial

deposits, or by some other cosmical action known only to physical geographers.

On the roads one occasionally encounters bridges; and here, again, I have discovered in Russia a key to the mysteries of Hibernian phraseology. An Irish member once declared to the House of Commons that the Church was "the bridge that separated the two great sections of the Irish people." As bridges commonly connect rather than separate, the metaphor was received with roars of laughter. If the honourable members who joined in the hilarious applause had travelled much in Russia, they would have been more moderate in their merriment; for in that country, despite the laudable activity of the modern system of local administration created in the 'sixties, bridges often act still as a barrier rather than a connecting link, and to cross a river by a bridge may still be what is termed in popular phrase "a tempting of Providence." The cautious driver will generally prefer to take to the water, if there is a ford within a reasonable distance, though both he and his human load may be obliged, in order to avoid getting wet feet, to assume undignified postures that would afford admirable material for the caricaturist. But this little bit of discomfort, even though the luggage should be soaked in the process of fording, is as nothing compared to the danger of crossing by the bridge. As I have no desire to harrow unnecessarily the feelings of the reader, I refrain from all description of ugly accidents, and shall simply explain in a few words how a successful passage is effected.

When it is possible to approach the bridge without sinking up to the knees in mud, it is better to avoid all risks by walking over and waiting for the vehicle on the other side; and when this is impossible, a preliminary survey is advisable. To your inquiries whether it is safe, your *yamstchik* (postboy) is sure to reply, "Nitchevo!"—a word which, according to the dictionaries, means "nothing," but which has, in the mouths of the peasantry, a great variety of meanings, as I may explain at some future time. In the present case it may be roughly translated. "There is no danger." "Nitchevo, Barin, proyédem" ("There is no danger, sir; we shall get over"), he repeats. You may refer to the generally

rotten appearance of the structure, and point in particular to the great holes sufficient to engulf half a post-horse. "Ne bos', Bog pomozhet" ("Do not fear, God will help"), replies coolly your phlegmatic Jehu. You may have your doubts as to whether in this irreligious age Providence will intervene specially for your benefit; but your *yamstchik*, who has more faith or fatalism, leaves you little time to solve the problem. Making hurriedly the sign of the cross, he gathers up his reins, waves his little whip in the air, and, shouting lustily, urges on his team. The operation is not wanting in excitement. First there is a short descent; then the horses plunge wildly through a zone of deep mud; next comes a fearful jolt, as the vehicle is jerked up on to the first planks; then the transverse planks, which are but loosely held in their places, rattle and rumble ominously, as the experienced, sagacious animals pick their way cautiously and gingerly among the dangerous holes and crevices; lastly, you plunge with a horrible jolt into a second mud zone, and finally regain terra firma, conscious of that pleasant sensation which a young cavalry officer may be supposed to feel after his first cavalry charge in real warfare.

Of course here, as elsewhere, familiarity breeds indifference. When you have successfully crossed without serious accident a few hundred bridges of this kind, you learn to be as cool and fatalistic as your *yamstchik*.

The reader who has heard of the gigantic reforms that have been repeatedly imposed on Russia by a paternal Government may naturally be astonished to learn that the roads are still in such a disgraceful condition. But for this, as for everything else in the world, there is a good and sufficient reason. The country is still, comparatively speaking, thinly populated, and in many regions it is difficult, or practically impossible, to procure in sufficient quantity stone of any kind, and especially hard stone fit for road-making. Besides this, when roads are made, the severity of the climate renders it difficult to keep them in good repair.

When a long journey has to be undertaken through a region in which there are no railways, there are several ways in which it may be effected. In former days, when time was of still less value than at present, many landed proprietors

travelled with their own horses, and carried with them, in one or more capacious, lumbering vehicles, all that was required for the degree of civilisation which they had attained; and their requirements were often considerable. The grand seigneur, for instance, who spent the greater part of his life amidst the luxury of the court society, naturally took with him all the portable elements of civilisation and comfort. His baggage included, therefore, camp-beds, table-linen, silver plate, a *batterie de cuisine*, and a French cook. The pioneers and part of the commissariat force were sent on in advance, so that his Excellency found at each halting-place everything prepared for his arrival. The poor owner of a few dozen serfs dispensed, of course, with the elaborate commissariat department, and contented himself with such modest fare as could be packed in the holes and corners of a single *tarantass*.

It will be well to explain here, parenthetically, what a *tarantass* is, for I shall often have occasion to use the word. It may be briefly defined as a phaeton without springs. The function of springs is imperfectly fulfilled by two parallel wooden bars, placed longitudinally, on which is fixed the body of the vehicle. It is commonly drawn by three horses —a strong, fast trotter in the shafts, flanked on each side by a light, loosely-attached horse that goes along at a gallop. The points of the shafts are connected by the *duga*, which looks like a gigantic, badly-formed horseshoe rising high above the collar of the trotter. To the top of the *duga* is attached the bearing-rein, and underneath the highest part of it is fastened a big bell—in the southern provinces I found two, and sometimes even three bells—which, when the country is open and the atmosphere still, may be heard a mile off. The use of the bell is variously explained. Some say it is in order to frighten the wolves, and others that it is to avoid collisions on the narrow forest paths. But neither of these explanations is entirely satisfactory. It is used chiefly in summer, when there is no danger of an attack from wolves; and the number of bells is greater in the south, where there are no forests. Perhaps the original intention was—I throw out the hint for the benefit of a certain school of archæologists—to frighten away evil spirits;

and the practice has been retained partly from unreasoning conservatism, and partly with a view to lessen the chances of collisions. As the roads are noiselessly soft, and the drivers not always vigilant, the dangers of collision are considerably diminished by the ceaseless peal.

Altogether, the *tarantass* is well adapted to the conditions in which it is used. By the curious way in which the horses are harnessed it recalls the war-chariot of ancient times. The horse in the shafts is compelled by the bearing-rein to keep his head high and straight before him—though the movement of his ears shows plainly that he would very much like to put it somewhere farther away from the tongue of the bell—but the side horses gallop freely, turning their heads outwards in classical fashion. I believe that this position is assumed not from any sympathy on the part of these animals for the remains of classical art, but rather from the natural desire to keep a sharp eye on the driver. Every movement of his right hand they watch with close attention, and as soon as they discover any symptoms indicating an intention of using the whip, they immediately show a desire to quicken the pace.

Now that the reader has gained some idea of what a *tarantass* is, we may return to the modes of travelling through the regions which are not yet supplied with railways.

However enduring and long-winded horses may be, they must be allowed sometimes, during a long journey, to rest and feed. Travelling long distances with one's own horses is therefore necessarily a slow operation, and is now quite antiquated. People who value their time prefer to make use of the Imperial Post organisation. On all the principal lines of communication there are regular post-stations, at from ten to twenty miles apart, where a certain number of horses and vehicles are kept for the convenience of travellers. To enjoy the privilege of this arrangement, one has to apply to the proper authorities for a *Podorozhnaya*—a large sheet of paper stamped with the Imperial Eagle, and bearing the name of the recipient, the destination, and the number of horses to be supplied. In return, a small sum is paid for imaginary road-repairs; the rest of the sum is paid by instalments at the respective stations.

Armed with this document you go to the post-station and demand the requisite number of horses. Three is the number generally used, but if you travel lightly and are indifferent to appearances, you may content yourself with a pair. The vehicle is a kind of *tarantass*, but not such as I have just described. The essentials in both are the same, but those which the Imperial Government provides resemble an enormous cradle on wheels rather than a phaeton. An armful of hay spread over the bottom of the wooden box is supposed to play the part of seats and cushions. You are expected to sit under the arched covering, and extend your legs so that the feet lie beneath the driver's seat; but it is advisable, unless the rain happens to be coming down in torrents, to get this covering unshipped, and travel without it. When used, it painfully curtails the little freedom of movement that you enjoy, and when you are shot upwards by some obstruction on the road, it is apt to arrest your ascent by giving you a violent blow on the top of the head.

It is to be hoped that you are in no hurry to start, otherwise your patience may be sorely tried. The horses, when at last produced, may seem to you the most miserable screws that it was ever your misfortune to behold; but you had better refrain from expressing your feelings, for if you use violent, uncomplimentary language, it may turn out that you have been guilty of gross calumny. I have seen many a team composed of animals which a third-class London costermonger would have spurned, and in which it was barely possible to recognise the equine form, do their duty in highly creditable style, and go along at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, under no stronger incentive than the voice of the *yamstchik*. Indeed, the capabilities of these lean, slouching, ungainly quadrupeds are often astounding when they are under the guidance of a man who knows how to drive them. Though such a man commonly carries a harmless little whip, he rarely uses it except by waving it horizontally in the air. His incitements are all oral. He talks to his cattle as he would to animals of his own species—now encouraging them by tender, caressing epithets, and now launching at them expressions of indignant scorn. At one

moment they are his "little doves," and at the next they have been transformed into "cursed hounds." How far they understand and appreciate this curious mixture of endearing cajolery and contemptuous abuse it is difficult to say, but there is no doubt that it somehow has upon them a strange and powerful influence.

Anyone who undertakes a journey of this kind should possess a well-knit, muscular frame and good tough sinews, capable of supporting an unlimited amount of jolting and shaking; at the same time, he should be well inured to all the hardships and discomforts incidental to what is vaguely termed "roughing it." When he wishes to sleep in a post-station, he will find nothing softer than a wooden bench, unless he can induce the keeper to put for him on the floor a bundle of hay, which is perhaps softer, but on the whole more disagreeable than the deal board. Sometimes he will not get even the wooden bench, for in ordinary post-stations there is but one room for travellers, and the two benches—there are rarely more—may be already occupied. When he does obtain a bench, and succeeds in falling asleep, he must not be astonished if he is disturbed once or twice during the night by people who use the apartment as a waiting-room whilst the post-horses are being changed. These passers-by may even order a samovar, and drink tea, chat, laugh, smoke, and make themselves otherwise disagreeable, utterly regardless of the sleepers. Then there are the other intruders, smaller in size but equally objectionable, of which I have already spoken when describing the steamers on the Don. Regarding them I desire to give merely one word of advice: As you will have abundant occupation in the work of self-defence, learn to distinguish between belligerents and neutrals, and follow the simple principle of international law, that neutrals should not be molested. They may be very ugly, but ugliness does not justify assassination. If, for instance, you should happen in awaking to notice a few black or brown beetles running about your pillow, restrain your murderous hand! If you kill them you commit an act of unnecessary bloodshed; for though they may playfully scamper around you, they will do you no bodily harm.

Another requisite for a journey in unfrequented districts

is a knowledge of the language. It is popularly supposed that if you are familiar with French and German you may travel anywhere in Russia. So far as the great cities and chief lines of communication are concerned, this may be true, but beyond that it is a delusion. The Russian has not, any more than the West-European, received from Nature the gift of tongues. Educated Russians often speak one or two foreign languages fluently, but the peasants know no language but their own, and it is with the peasantry that one comes in contact. And to converse freely with the peasant requires a considerable familiarity with the language—far more than is required for simply reading a book. Though there are few provincialisms, and all classes of the people use the same words—except the words of foreign origin, which are used only by the upper classes—the peasant always speaks in a more laconic and more idiomatic way than the educated man.

In the winter months travelling is in some respects pleasanter than in summer, for snow and frost are great macadamisers. If the snow falls evenly, there is for some time the most delightful road that can be imagined. No jolts, no shaking, but a smooth, gliding motion, like that of a boat in calm water, and the horses gallop along as if totally unconscious of the sledge behind them. Unfortunately, this happy state of things does not last all through the winter. The road soon gets cut up, and deep transverse furrows (*ukhábу*) are formed. How these furrows come into existence I have never been able clearly to comprehend, though I have often heard the phenomenon explained by men who imagined they understood it. Whatever the cause and mode of formation may be, certain it is that little hills and valleys do get formed, and the sledge, as it crosses over them, bobs up and down like a boat in a chopping sea, with this important difference, that the boat falls into a yielding liquid, whereas the sledge falls upon a solid substance, unyielding and unelastic. The shaking and jolting which result may readily be imagined.

There are other discomforts, too, in winter travelling. So long as the air is perfectly still, the cold may be very intense without being disagreeable; but if a strong head wind is

blowing, and the thermometer ever so many degrees below zero, driving in an open sledge is a very disagreeable operation, and noses may get frostbitten without their owners perceiving the fact in time to take preventive measures. Then why not take covered sledges on such occasions? For the simple reason that they are not to be had; and if they could be procured, it would be well to avoid using them, for they are apt to produce something very like sea-sickness. Besides this, when the sledge gets overturned, it is pleasanter to be shot out on to the clean, refreshing snow than to be buried ignominiously under a pile of miscellaneous baggage.

The chief requisite for winter travelling in these icy regions is a plentiful supply of warm furs. An Englishman is very apt to be imprudent in this respect, and to trust too much to his natural power of resisting cold. To a certain extent this confidence is justifiable, for an Englishman often feels quite comfortable in an ordinary great coat, when his Russian friends consider it necessary to envelop themselves in furs of the warmest kind; but it may be carried too far, in which case severe punishment is sure to follow, as I once learned by experience. I may relate the incident as a warning to others.

One day in mid-winter I started from Novgorod, with the intention of visiting some friends at a cavalry barracks situated about ten miles from the town. As the sun was shining brightly, and the distance to be traversed was short, I considered that a light fur and a *bashlyk*—a cloth hood which protects the ears—would be quite sufficient to keep out the cold, and foolishly disregarded the warnings of a Russian friend who happened to call as I was about to start. Our route lay along the river due northward, right in the teeth of a strong north wind. A wintry north wind is always and everywhere a disagreeable enemy to face; let the reader try to imagine what it is when the Fahrenheit thermometer is at 30° below zero—or rather let him refrain from such an attempt, for the sensation produced cannot be imagined by those who have not experienced it. Of course I ought to have turned back—at least, as soon as a sensation of faintness warned me that the circulation was being seriously impeded—but I did not wish to confess my imprudence to the

friend who accompanied me. When we had driven about three-fourths of the way, we met a peasant woman, who gesticulated violently, and shouted something to us as we passed. I did not hear what she said, but my friend turned to me and said in an alarming tone—we had been speaking German—"Mein Gott! Ihre Nase ist abgefrohren!" Now the word "*ab*gefrohren," as the reader will understand, seemed to indicate that my nose was frozen *off*, so I put up my hand in some alarm to discover whether I had inadvertently lost the whole or part of the member referred to. It was still *in situ* and entire, but as hard and insensible as a bit of wood.

"You may still save it," said my companion, "if you get out at once and rub it vigorously with snow."

I got out as directed, but was too faint to do anything vigorously. My fur cloak flew open, the cold seemed to grasp me in the region of the heart, and I fell insensible.

How long I remained unconscious I know not. When I awoke I found myself in a strange room, surrounded by dragoon officers in uniform, and the first words I heard were, "He is out of danger now, but he will have a fever."

These words were spoken, as I afterwards discovered, by a very competent surgeon; but the prophecy was not fulfilled: The promised fever never came. The only bad consequences were that for some days my right hand remained stiff, and for a week or two I had to conceal my nose from public view.

If this little incident justifies me in drawing a general conclusion, I should say that exposure to extreme cold is an almost painless form of death; but that the process of being resuscitated is very painful indeed—so painful, that the patient may be excused for momentarily regretting that officious people prevented the temporary insensibility from becoming "the sleep that knows no waking."

Between the alternate reigns of winter and summer there is always a short interregnum, during which travelling in Russia by road is almost impossible. Woe to the ill-fated mortal who has to make a long road-journey immediately after the winter snow has melted; or, worse still, at the beginning of winter, when the autumn mud has been petrified by the frost, and not yet levelled by the snow!

At all seasons the monotony of a journey is pretty sure to be broken by little unforeseen episodes of a more or less disagreeable kind. An axle breaks, or a wheel comes off, or there is a difficulty in procuring horses. As an illustration of the graver episodes which may occur, I shall make here a quotation from my note-book:

Early in the morning we arrived at Maikop, a small town commanding the entrance to one of the valleys which run up towards the main range of the Caucasus. On alighting at the post-station, we at once ordered horses for the next stage, and received the laconic reply, "There are no horses."

"And when will there be some?"

"To-morrow!"

This last reply we took for a piece of playful exaggeration, and demanded the book in which, according to law, the departure of horses is duly inscribed, and from which it is easy to calculate when the first team should be ready to start. A short calculation proved that we ought to get horses by four o'clock in the afternoon, so we showed the station-keeper various documents, signed by the Minister of the Interior and other influential personages, and advised him to avoid all contravention of the postal regulations.

These documents, which proved that we enjoyed the special protection of the authorities, had generally been of great service to us in our dealings with rascally station-keepers; but this station-keeper was not one of the ordinary type. He was a Cossack, of herculean proportions, with a bullet-shaped head, short-cropped bristly hair, shaggy eyebrows, an enormous pendent moustache, a defiant air, and a peculiar expression of countenance which plainly indicated "an ugly customer." Though it was still early in the day, he had evidently already imbibed a considerable quantity of alcohol, and his whole demeanour showed clearly enough that he was not of those who are "pleasant in their liquor." After glancing superciliously at the documents, as if to intimate he could read them were he so disposed, he threw them down on the table, and, thrusting his gigantic paws into his capacious trouser-pockets, remarked slowly and decisively, in something deeper than a double-bass voice, "You'll have horses to-morrow morning."

Wishing to avoid a quarrel, we tried to hire horses in the village, and when our efforts in that direction proved fruitless, we applied to the head of the rural police. He came and used all his influence with the refractory post-master, but in vain. Hercules was not in a mood to listen to officials any more than to ordinary mortals. At last, after considerable trouble to himself, our friend of the police contrived to find horses for us, and we contented ourselves with entering an account of the circumstances in the Complaint Book; but our difficulties were by no means at an end. As soon as Hercules perceived that we had obtained horses without his assistance, and that he had thereby lost his opportunity of blackmailing us, he offered us one of his own teams, and insisted on detaining us until we should cancel the complaint against him. This we refused to do, and our relations with him became what is called in diplomatic language "extrêmement tendues." Again we had to apply to the police.

My friend mounted guard over the baggage whilst I went to the police office. I was not long absent, but I found, on my return, that important events had taken place in the interval. A crowd had collected round the post-station, and on the steps stood the keeper and his postboys, declaring that the traveller inside had attempted to shoot them! I rushed in and soon perceived, by the smell of gunpowder, that firearms had been used, but found no trace of casualties. My friend was tramping up and down the little room, and evidently, for the moment, there was an armistice.

In a very short time the local authorities had assembled, a candle had been lit, two armed Cossacks stood as sentries at the door, and the preliminary investigation had begun. The Chief of Police sat at the table and wrote rapidly on a sheet of foolscap. The investigation showed that two shots had been fired from a revolver, and two bullets were found embedded in the wall. All those who had been present, and some who knew nothing of the incident except by hearsay, were duly examined. Our opponents always assumed that my friend had been the assailant, in spite of his protestations to the contrary, and more than once the words *pokushenié na ubiistvo* (attempt to murder) were pronounced.

Things looked very black indeed. We had the prospect of being detained for days and weeks in the miserable place, till the insatiable demon of official formality had been propitiated. And then?

When things were thus at their blackest they suddenly took an unexpected turn, and the *deus ex machinâ* appeared precisely at the right moment, just as if we had all been puppets in a sensation novel. There was the usual momentary silence, and then, mixed with the sound of an approaching *tarantass*, a confused murmur: "There he is! He is coming!" The "he" thus vaguely and mysteriously indicated turned out to be an official of the judicial administration, who had reason to visit the village for an entirely different affair. As soon as he had been told briefly what had happened he took the matter in hand and showed himself equal to the occasion. Unlike the majority of Russian officials, he disliked lengthy procedure, and succeeded in making the case quite clear in a very short time. There had been, he perceived, no attempt to murder or anything of the kind. The station-keeper and his two postboys, who had no right to be in the travellers' room, had entered with threatening mien, and when they refused to retire peaceably, my friend had fired two shots in order to frighten them and bring assistance. The falsity of their statement that he had fired at them as they entered the room was proved by the fact that the bullets were lodged near the ceiling in the wall farthest away from the door.

I must confess that I was agreeably surprised by this unexpected turn of affairs. The conclusions arrived at were nothing more than a simple statement of what had taken place; but I was surprised at the fact that a man who was at once a lawyer and a Russian official should have been able to take such a plain, common-sense view of the case.

Before midnight we were once more free men, driving rapidly in the clear moonlight to the next station, under the escort of a fully-armed Circassian Cossack; but the idea that we might have been detained for weeks in that miserable place haunted us like a nightmare.

CHAPTER II

IN THE NORTHERN FORESTS

THERE are many ways of describing a country that one has visited. The simplest and most common method is to give a chronological account of the journey; and this is perhaps the best way when the journey does not extend over more than a few weeks. But it cannot be conveniently employed in the case of a residence of many years. Did I adopt it, I should very soon exhaust the reader's patience. I should have to take him with me to a secluded village, and make him wait for me till I had learned to speak the language. Thence he would have to accompany me to a provincial town, and spend months in a public office, whilst I endeavoured to master the mysteries of local self-government. After this he would have to spend two years with me in a big library, where I studied the history and literature of the country. And so on, and so on. Even my journeys would prove tedious to him, as they often were to myself, for he would have to drive with me many a score of weary miles, where even the most zealous diary-writer would find nothing to record beyond the names of the post-stations.

It will be well for me, then, to avoid the strictly chronological method, and confine myself to a description of the more striking objects and incidents that came under my notice. The knowledge which I derived from books will help me to supply a running commentary on what I happened to see and hear.

Instead of beginning in the usual way with St. Petersburg, I prefer for many reasons to leave the description of the capital till some future time, and plunge at once into the great northern forest region.

If it were possible to get a bird's-eye view of European Russia, the spectator would perceive that the country is composed of two halves, widely differing from each oth

in character.. The northern half is a land of forest and morass, plentifully supplied with water in the form of rivers, lakes, and marshes, and broken up by sporadic patches of cultivation. The southern half is, as it were, the other side of the pattern—an immense expanse of rich arable land, broken up by occasional patches of sand or forest. The imaginary undulating line separating those two regions starts from the western frontier about the 50th parallel of latitude, and runs in a north-easterly direction till it enters the Ural range at about 56° N.L.

Well do I remember my first experience of travel in the northern region, and the weeks of voluntary exile which formed the goal of the journey. It was in the summer of 1870. My reason for undertaking the journey was this: a few months of life in St. Petersburg had fully convinced me that the Russian language is one of those things which can only be acquired by practice, and that even a person of antediluvian longevity might spend all his life in that city without learning to express himself fluently in the vernacular —especially if he has the misfortune of being able to speak English, French, and German. With his friends and associates he speaks French or English. German serves as a medium of communication with waiters, shopkeepers, and other people of that class. It is only with *isvoshtchiki*—the drivers of the little open droshkis which fulfil the function of cabs—that he is obliged to use the native tongue, and with them a very limited vocabulary suffices. The ordinal numerals and four short, easily acquired expressions—*poshól* (go on), *na právo* (to the right), *na lyévo* (to the left), and *stoi* (stop)—are all that is required.

Whilst I was considering how I could get beyond the sphere of West-European languages, a friend came to my assistance, and suggested that I should go to his estate in the province of Novgorod, where I should find an intelligent, amiable parish priest, quite innocent of any linguistic acquirements. This proposal I at once adopted, and accordingly found myself one morning at a small station of the Moscow Railway, endeavouring to explain to a peasant in sheep's clothing that I wished to be conveyed to Ivánovka, the village where my future teacher lived. At that time I

still spoke Russian in a very fragmentary and confused way —pretty much as Spanish cows are popularly supposed to speak French. My first remark, therefore, being literally interpreted, was, "Iványovka. Horses. You can?" The point of interrogation was expressed by a simultaneous raising of the voice and the eyebrows.

"Iványovka?" cried the peasant, in an interrogatory tone of voice. In Russia, as in other countries, the peasantry, when speaking with strangers like to repeat questions, apparently for the purpose of gaining time.

"Iványovka," I replied.

"Now?"

"Now!"

After some reflection the peasant nodded and said something which I did not understand, but which I assumed to mean that he was open to consider proposals for transporting me to my destination.

"Roubles. How many?"

To judge by the knitting of the brows and the scratching of the head, I should say that that question gave occasion to a very abstruse mathematical calculation. Gradually the look of concentrated attention gave place to an expression such as children assume when they endeavour to get a parental decision reversed by means of coaxing. Then came a stream of soft words which were to me utterly unintelligible.

I must not weary the reader with a detailed account of the succeeding negotiations, which were conducted with extreme diplomatic caution on both sides, as if a cession of territory or the payment of a war-indemnity had been the subject of discussion. Three times he drove away and three times returned. Each time he abated his pretensions, and each time I slightly increased my offer. At last, when I began to fear that he had finally taken his departure and had left me to my own devices, he re-entered the room and took up my baggage, indicating thereby that he agreed to my last proposal.

The sum agreed upon would have been, under ordinary circumstances, more than sufficient, but before proceeding far I discovered that the circumstances were by no means ordinary, and I began to understand the pantomimic gesticu-

lation which had puzzled me during the negotiations. Heavy rain had fallen without interruption for several days, and now the track on which we were travelling could not, without poetical licence, be described as a road. In some parts it resembled a water-course, in others a quagmire, and at least during the first half of the journey I was constantly reminded of that stage in the work of creation when the water was not yet separated from the dry land. During the few moments when the work of keeping my balance and preventing my baggage from being lost did not engross all my attention, I speculated on the possibility of inventing a boat-carriage, to be drawn by some amphibious quadruped. Fortunately our two lean, wiry little horses did not object to being used as aquatic animals. They took the water bravely, and plunged through the mud in gallant style. The *teléga* in which we were seated—a four-wheeled skeleton cart—did not submit to the ill-treatment so silently. It creaked out its remonstrances and entreaties, and at the more difficult spots threatened to go to pieces; but its owner understood its character and capabilities, and paid no attention to its ominous threats. Once, indeed, a wheel came off, but it was soon fished out of the mud and replaced, and no further casualty occurred.

The horses did their work so well that when about midday we arrived at a village, I could not refuse to let them have some rest and refreshment—all the more as my own thoughts had begun to turn in that direction.

The village, like villages in that part of the country generally, consisted of two long parallel rows of wooden houses. The road—if a stratum of deep mud can be called by that name—formed the intervening space. All the houses turned their gables to the passer-by, and some of them had pretensions to architectural decoration in the form of rude perforated woodwork. Between the houses, and in a line with them, were great wooden gates and high wooden fences, separating the courtyards from the road. Into one of these yards, near the farther end of the village, our horses turned of their own accord.

"An inn?" I said, in an interrogative tone.

The driver shook his head and said something, in

which I detected the word "friend." Evidently there was no hostelry for man and beast in the village, and the driver was using a friend's house for the purpose.

The yard was flanked on the one side by an open shed, containing rude agricultural implements which might throw some light on the agriculture of the primitive Aryans, and on the other side by the dwelling-house and stable. Both the house and stable were built of logs, nearly cylindrical in form, and placed in horizontal tiers.

Two of the strongest of human motives, hunger and curiosity, impelled me to enter the house at once. Without waiting for an invitation, I went up to the door—half protected against the winter snows by a small open portico—and unceremoniously walked in. The first apartment was empty, but I noticed a low door in the wall to the left, and, passing through this, entered the principal room. As the scene was new to me, I noted the chief objects. In the wall before me were two small square windows looking out upon the road, and in the corner to the right, nearer to the ceiling than to the floor, was a little triangular shelf, on which stood a religious picture. Before the picture hung a curious oil lamp. In the corner to the left of the door was a gigantic stove, built of brick, and whitewashed. From the top of the stove to the wall on the right stretched what might be called an enormous shelf, six or eight feet in breadth. This was the so-called *palâti*, as I afterwards discovered, and served as a bed for part of the family. The furniture consisted of a long wooden bench attached to the wall on the right, a big, heavy deal table, and a few wooden stools.

Whilst I was leisurely surveying these objects, I heard a noise on the top of the stove, and, looking up, perceived a human face, with long hair parted in the middle, and a full yellow beard. I was considerably astonished by this apparition, for the air in the room was stifling, and I had some difficulty in believing that any created being—except perhaps a salamander or a negro—could exist in such a position. I looked hard to convince myself that I was not the victim of a delusion. As I stared, the head nodded slowly and pronounced the customary form of greeting.

I returned the greeting slowly, wondering what was to come next.

"Ill, very ill!" sighed the head.

"I'm not astonished at that," I remarked, in an "aside." "If I were lying on the stove as you are I should be very ill too."

"Hot, very hot?" I remarked, interrogatively.

"Nitchevo"—that is to say, "Not particularly." This remark astonished me all the more, as I noticed that the body to which the head belonged was enveloped in a sheepskin!

After living some time in Russia I was no longer surprised by such incidents, for I soon discovered that the Russian peasant has a marvellous power of bearing extreme heat as well as extreme cold. When a coachman takes his master or mistress to the theatre or to a party, he never thinks of going home and returning at an appointed time. Hour after hour he sits placidly on the box, and though the cold be of an intensity such as is never experienced in our temperate climate, he can sleep as tranquilly as the *lazzarone* at mid-day in Naples. In that respect the Russian peasant seems to be first-cousin to the polar bear, but, unlike the animals of the arctic regions, he is not at all incommoded by excessive heat. On the contrary, he likes it when he can get it, and never omits an opportunity of laying in a reserve supply of caloric. He even delights in rapid transitions from one extreme to the other, as is amply proved by a curious custom which deserves to be recorded.

The reader must know that in the life of the Russian peasantry the weekly vapour-bath plays a most important part. It has even a certain religious signification, for no good orthodox peasant would dare to enter a church after being soiled by certain kinds of pollution without cleansing himself physically and morally by means of the bath. In the weekly arrangements it forms the occupation for Saturday afternoon, and care is taken to avoid thereafter all pollution until after the morning service on Sunday. Many villages possess a public or communal bath of the most primitive construction, but in some parts of the country—I am not sure how far the practice extends—the peasants

take their vapour-bath in the household oven in which the bread is baked! In all cases the operation is pushed to the extreme limit of human endurance—far beyond the utmost limit that can be endured by those who have not been accustomed to it from childhood. For my own part, I only made the experiment once; and when I informed my attendant that my life was in danger from congestion of the brain, he laughed outright, and told me that the operation had only begun. Most astounding of all—and this brings me to the fact which led me into this digression—the peasants in winter often rush out of the bath and roll themselves in the snow! This aptly illustrates a common Russian proverb, which says that what is health to the Russian is death to the German.

Cold water, as well as hot vapour, is sometimes used as a means of purification. In the villages the old pagan habit of masquerading in absurd costumes at certain seasons—as is done during the carnival in Roman Catholic countries with the approval, or at least connivance, of the Church—still survives; but it is regarded as not altogether sinless. He who uses such disguises places himself to a certain extent under the influence of the Evil One, thereby putting his soul in jeopardy; and to free himself from this danger he has to purify himself in the following way: When the annual mid-winter ceremony of blessing the waters is performed, by breaking a hole in the ice and immersing a cross with certain religious rites, he should plunge into the hole as soon as possible after the ceremony. I remember once at Yaroslavl, on the Volga, two young peasants successfully accomplished this feat—though the police have orders to prevent it—and escaped, apparently without evil consequences, though the Fahrenheit thermometer was below zero. How far the custom has really a purifying influence is a question which must be left to theologians; but even an ordinary mortal can understand that, if it be regarded as a penance, it must have a certain deterrent effect. The man who foresees the necessity of undergoing this severe penance will think twice before putting on a disguise. So at least it must have been in the good old times; but in these degenerate days—among the Russian

peasantry as elsewhere—the fear of the Devil, which was formerly, if not the beginning, at least one of the essential elements of wisdom, has greatly decreased. Many a young peasant will now thoughtlessly disguise himself, and when the consecration of the water is performed, will stand and look on passively like an ordinary spectator! It would seem that the Devil, like his enemy the Pope, is destined to lose gradually his temporal power.

But all this time I am neglecting my new acquaintance on the top of the stove. In reality I did not neglect him, but listened most attentively to every word of the long tale that he recited. What it was all about I could only vaguely guess, for I did not understand more than ten per cent. of the words used, but I assumed from the tone and gestures that he was relating to me all the incidents and symptoms of his illness. And a very severe illness it must have been, for it requires a very considerable amount of physical suffering to make the patient Russian peasant groan. Before he had finished his tale a woman entered, apparently his wife. To her I explained that I had a strong desire to eat and drink, and that I wished to know what she could give me. By a good deal of laborious explanation I was made to understand that I could have eggs, black bread, and milk, and we agreed that there should be a division of labour: my hostess should prepare the samovar for boiling water, whilst I should fry the eggs to my own satisfaction.

In a few minutes the repast was ready, and, though not very delicate, was highly acceptable. The tea and sugar I had, of course, brought with me; the eggs were not very highly flavoured; and the black rye-bread, strongly intermixed with sand, could be eaten by a peculiar and easily acquired method of mastication, in which the upper molars are never allowed to touch those of the lower jaw. In this way the grating of the sand between the teeth is avoided.

Eggs, black bread, milk, and tea—these formed my ordinary articles of food during all my wanderings in Northern Russia. Occasionally potatoes could be got, and afforded the possibility of varying the bill of fare. The favourite materials employed in the native cookery are sour

cabbage, cucumbers, and *kvass*—a kind of very small beer made from black bread. None of these can be recommended to the traveller who is not already accustomed to them.

The remainder of the journey was accomplished at a rather more rapid pace than the preceding part, for the road was decidedly better, though it was traversed by numerous half-buried roots, which produced violent jolts. From the conversation of the driver I gathered that wolves, bears, and elks were found in the forest through which we were passing.

The sun had long since set when we reached our destination, and I found to my dismay that the priest's house was closed for the night. To rouse the reverend personage from his slumbers, and endeavour to explain to him with my limited vocabulary the object of my visit, was not to be thought of. On the other hand, there was no inn of any kind in the vicinity. When I consulted the driver as to what was to be done, he meditated for a little, and then pointed to a large house at some distance where there were still lights. It turned out to be the country-house of the gentleman who had advised me to undertake the journey, and here, after a short explanation, though the owner was not at home, I was hospitably received.

It had been my intention to live in the priest's house, but a short interview with him on the following day convinced me that that part of my plan could not be carried out. The preliminary objections that I should find but poor fare in his humble household, and much more of the same kind, were at once put aside by my assurance, made partly by pantomime, that, as an old traveller, I was well accustomed to simple fare, and could always accommodate myself to the habits of people among whom my lot happened to be cast. But there was a more serious difficulty. The priest's family had, as is generally the case with priests' families, been rapidly increasing during the last few years, and his house had not been growing with equal rapidity. The natural consequence of this was that he had not a room or a bed to spare. The little room which he had formerly kept for occasional visitors was now occupied by his eldest daughter, who had returned from a "school for the

daughters of the clergy," where she had been for the last two years. Under these circumstances, I was constrained to accept the kind proposal made to me by the representative of my absent friend, that I should take up my quarters in one of the numerous unoccupied rooms in the manor house. This arrangement, I was reminded, would not at all interfere with my proposed studies, for the priest lived close at hand, and I might spend with him as much time as I liked.

And now let me introduce the reader to my reverend teacher, and one or two other personages whose acquaintance I made during my voluntary exile.

CHAPTER III

VOLUNTARY EXILE

THIS village, Ivánovka by name, in which I proposed to spend some months, was rather more picturesque than villages in these northern forests commonly are. The peasants' huts, built on both sides of a straight road, were colourless enough, and the big church, with its five pear-shaped cupolas rising out of the bright green roof and its ugly belfry in the Renaissance style, was not by any means beautiful in itself; but when seen from a little distance, especially in the soft evening twilight, the whole might have been made the subject of a very pleasing picture. From the point that a landscape-painter would naturally have chosen, the foreground was formed by a meadow, through which flowed sluggishly a meandering stream. On a bit of rising ground to the right, and half concealed by an intervening cluster of old, rich-coloured pines, stood the manor house—a box-shaped, whitewashed building, with a veranda in front, overlooking a small plot that might some day become a flower garden. To the left of this stood the village, the houses grouping prettily with the big church, and a little farther in this direction was an avenue of graceful birches. On the extreme left were fields, bounded by a dark border of fir-trees. Could the spectator have raised himself a few hundred feet from the ground, he would have seen that there were fields beyond the village, and that the whole of this agricultural oasis was imbedded in a forest stretching in all directions as far as the eye could reach.

The history of the place may be told in a few words. In former times the estate, including the village and all its inhabitants, had belonged to a monastery, but when, in 1764, the Church lands were secularised by Catherine II., it became the property of the State. Some years afterwards the Empress granted it, with the serfs and everything else

which it contained, to an old general who had distinguished himself in the Turkish wars. From that time it had remained in the K—— family. Some time between the years 1820 and 1840, the big church and the mansion house had been built by the actual possessor's father, who loved country life, and devoted a large part of his time and energies to the management of his estate. His son, on the contrary, preferred St. Petersburg to the country, served in one of the public offices, loved passionately French plays and other products of urban civilisation, and left the entire management of the property to a German steward, popularly known as Karl Karl'itch, whom I shall introduce to the reader presently.

The village annals contained no important events, except bad harvests, cattle plagues, and destructive fires, with which the inhabitants seem to have been periodically visited from time immemorial. If good harvests were ever experienced, they must have faded from the popular recollection. Then there were certain ancient traditions which might have been lessened in bulk and improved in quality by being subjected to searching historical criticism. More than once, for instance, a *leshie,* or wood-sprite, had been seen in the neighbourhood; and in several households the *domovoi,* or brownie, had been known to play strange pranks until he was properly propitiated. And as a set-off against these manifestations of evil powers, there were well-authenticated stories about a miracle-working image that had mysteriously appeared on the branch of a tree, and about numerous miraculous cures that had been effected by means of pilgrimages to holy shrines.

But it is time to introduce the principal personages of this little community. Of these, by far the most important was Karl Karl'itch, the steward.

First of all I ought, perhaps, to explain how Karl Schmidt, the son of a well-to-do *Bauer* in the Prussian village of Schönhausen, became Karl Karl'itch, the principal personage in the Russian village of Ivánovka.

About the time of the Crimean War, many of the Russian landed proprietors had become alive to the necessity of improving the primitive, traditional methods of agriculture,

and sought for this purpose German stewards for their estates. Among these proprietors was the owner of Ivánovka. Through the medium of a friend in Berlin, he succeeded in engaging for a moderate salary a young man who had just finished his studies in one of the German schools of agriculture—the institution at Hohenheim, if my memory does not deceive me. This young man had arrived in Russia as plain Karl Schmidt, but his name was soon transformed into Karl Karl'itch, not from any desire of his own, but in accordance with a curious Russian custom. In Russia, one usually calls a man not by his family name, but by his Christian name and patronymic—the latter being formed from the name of his father. Thus, if a man's name is Nicholas, and his father's Christian name is—or was—Ivan, you address him as Nikolaï Ivánovitch (pronounced Iván'itch); and if this man should happen to have a sister called Mary, you will address her—even though she should be married—as Marya Ivánovna (pronounced Ivanna).

Immediately on his arrival, young Schmidt had set himself vigorously to reorganise the estate and improve the method of agriculture. Some ploughs, harrows, and other implements which had been imported at a former period were dragged out of the obscurity in which they had lain for several years, and an attempt was made to farm on scientific principles. The attempt was far from being completely successful, for the serfs—this was before the Emancipation—could not be made to work like regularly trained German labourers. In spite of all admonitions, threats, and punishments, they still persisted in working slowly, listlessly, inaccurately, and occasionally they broke the new instruments, from carelessness or some more culpable motive. Karl Karl'itch was not naturally a hard-hearted man, but he was very rigid in his notions of duty, and could be cruelly severe when his orders were not executed with an accuracy and punctuality that seemed to the Russian rustic mind mere useless pedantry. The serfs did not offer him any open opposition, and were always obsequiously respectful in their demeanour towards him, but they invariably frustrated his plans by their carelessness and stolid, passive resistance.

Thus arose that silent conflict and that smouldering

mutual enmity which almost always result from the contact of the Teuton with the Slav. The serfs instinctively regretted the good old times, when they lived under the rough-and-ready patriarchal rule of their masters, assisted by a native *burmister*, or overseer, who was one of themselves. The *burmister* had not always been honest in his dealings with them, and the master had often, when in anger, ordered severe punishments to be inflicted; but the *burmister* had not attempted to make them change their old habits, and had shut his eyes to many little sins of omission and commission, whilst the master was always ready to assist them in difficulties, and commonly treated them in a kindly, familiar way. As the old Russian proverb has it, "Where anger is, there too is kindly forgiveness." Karl Karl'itch, on the contrary, was the personification of uncompassionate, inflexible law. Blind rage and compassionate kindliness were alike foreign to his system of government. If he had any feeling towards the serfs, it was one of chronic contempt. The word *durák* (blockhead) was constantly on his lips, and when any bit of work was well done, he took it as a matter of course, and never thought of giving a word of approval or encouragement.

When it became evident, in 1859, that the emancipation of the serfs was at hand, Karl Karl'itch confidently predicted that the country would inevitably go to ruin. He knew by experience that the peasants were lazy and improvident, even when they lived under the tutelage of a master and with the fear of the rod before their eyes. What would they become when this guidance and salutary restraint would be removed? The prospect raised terrible forebodings in the mind of the worthy steward, who had his employer's interests really at heart; and these forebodings were considerably increased and intensified when he learned that the peasants were to receive by law the land which they occupied on sufferance, and which comprised about a half of the whole arable land of the estate. This arrangement he declared to be a dangerous and unjustifiable infraction of the sacred rights of property, which savoured strongly of communism, and could have but one practical result: the emancipated peasants would live by the cultivation of their

own land, and would not consent on any terms to work for their former master.

In the few months which immediately followed the publication of the Emancipation Edict in 1861,* Karl Karl'itch found much to confirm his most gloomy apprehensions. The peasants showed themselves dissatisfied with the privileges conferred upon them, and sought to evade the corresponding duties imposed on them by the new law. In vain he endeavoured, by exhortations, promises, and threats, to get the most necessary part of the field-work done, and showed the peasants the provision of the law enjoining them to obey and work as of old until some new arrangement should be made. To all his appeals they replied that, having been freed by the Tsar, they were no longer obliged to work for their former master; and he was at last forced to appeal to the authorities. This step had a certain effect, but the field-work was executed that year even worse than usual, and the harvest suffered in consequence.

Since that time things had gradually improved. The peasants had discovered that they could not support themselves and pay their taxes from the land ceded to them, and had accordingly consented to till the proprietor's fields for a moderate recompense. "These last two years," said Karl Karl'itch to me, with an air of honest self-satisfaction, "I have been able, after paying all expenses, to transmit little sums to the young master in St. Petersburg. It was certainly not much, but it shows that things are better than they were. Still, it is hard, uphill work. The peasants have not been improved by liberty. They now work less and drink more than they did in the times of serfage, and if you say a word to them they'll go away, and not work for you at all." Here Karl Karl'itch indemnified himself for his recent self-control in the presence of his workers by using a series of the strongest epithets which the combined languages of his native and of his adopted country could supply. "But laziness and drunkenness are not their only faults. They let their cattle wander into our fields, and never lose an opportunity of stealing firewood from the forest."

* An account of the Emancipation of the Serfs will be found in Chapters XXIX., XXX., and XXXI.

"But you have now for such matters the rural justices of the peace," I ventured to suggest.

"The justices of the peace!" . . . . . Here Karl Karl'itch used an inelegant expression, which showed plainly that he was no unqualified admirer of the new judicial institutions. "What is the use of applying to the justices? The nearest one lives six miles off, and when I go to him he evidently tries to make me lose as much time as possible. I am sure to lose nearly a whole day, and at the end of it I may find that I have got nothing for my pains. These justices always try to find some excuse for the peasant, and when they do condemn, by way of exception, the affair does not end there. There is pretty sure to be a pettifogging practitioner prowling about—some rascally scribe who has been dismissed from the public offices for pilfering and extorting too openly—and he is always ready to whisper to the peasant that he should appeal. The peasant knows that the decision is just, but he is easily persuaded that by appealing to the Monthly Sessions he gets another chance in the lottery, and may perhaps draw a prize. He lets the rascally scribe, therefore, prepare an appeal for him, and I receive an invitation to attend the Session of Justices in the district town on a certain day.

"It is a good five-and-thirty miles to the district town, as you know, but I get up early, and arrive at eleven o'clock, the hour stated in the official notice. A crowd of peasants is hanging about the door of the court, but the only official present is the porter. I inquire of him when my case is likely to come on, and receive the laconic answer, 'How should I know?' After half an hour the secretary arrives. I repeat my question, and receive the same answer. Another half-hour passes, and one of the justices drives up in his *tarantass*. Perhaps he is a glib-tongued gentleman, and assures me that the proceedings will commence at once: 'Sei tchas! sei tchas!' Don't believe what the priest or the dictionary tells you about the meaning of that expression. The dictionary will tell you that it means 'immediately,' but that's all nonsense. In the mouth of a Russian it means 'in an hour,' 'next week,' 'in a year or

two,' 'never'—most commonly 'never.' Like many other words in Russian, 'sei tchas' can be understood only after long experience. A second justice drives up, and then a third. No more are required by law, but these gentlemen must first smoke several cigarettes and discuss all the local news before they begin work.

"At last they take their seats on the bench—a slightly elevated platform at one end of the room, behind a table covered with green baize—and the proceedings commence. My case is sure to be pretty far down on the list—the secretary takes, I believe, a malicious pleasure in watching my impatience—and before it is called the justices have to retire at least once for refreshments and cigarettes. I have to amuse myself by listening to the other cases, and some of them, I can assure you, are amusing enough. The walls of that room must be by this time pretty well saturated with perjury, and many of the witnesses catch at once the infection. Perhaps I may tell you some other time a few of the amusing incidents that I have seen there. At last my case is called. It is as clear as daylight, but the rascally pettifogger is there with a long, prepared speech. He holds in his hand a small volume of the codified law, and quotes paragraphs which no amount of human ingenuity can make to bear upon the subject. Perhaps the previous decision is confirmed; perhaps it is reversed; in either case, I have lost a second day and exhausted more patience than I can conveniently spare. And something even worse may happen, as I know by experience. Once during a case of mine there was some little informality—someone inadvertently opened the door of the consulting-room when the decision was being written, or some other little incident of the sort occurred, and the rascally pettifogger complained to the Supreme Court of Revision, which is a part of the Senate. The case was all about a few roubles, but it was discussed in St. Petersburg, and afterwards tried over again by another court of justices. Now I have paid my *Lehrgeld,* and go no more to law."

"Then you must expose yourself to all kinds of extortion?"

"Not so much as you might imagine. I have my own

way of dispensing justice. When I catch a peasant's horse or cow in our fields, I lock it up and make the owner pay a ransom."

"Is it not rather dangerous," I inquired, "to take the law thus into your own hands? I have heard that the Russian justices are extremely severe against anyone who has recourse to what your German jurists call *Selbsthülfe*."

"That they are! So long as you are in Russia, you had much better let yourself be quietly robbed than use any violence against the robber. It is less trouble, and it is cheaper in the long run. If you do not, you may unexpectedly find yourself some fine morning in prison! You must know that many of the young justices belong to the new school of morals."

"What is that? I have not heard of any new discoveries lately in the sphere of speculative ethics."

"Well, to tell you the truth, I am not one of the initiated, and I can only tell you what I hear. So far as I have noticed, the representatives of the new doctrine talk chiefly about *Gumannost'* and *Tchelovetcheskoe dostoinstvo*. You know what these words mean?"

"Humanity, or rather humanitarianism and human dignity," I replied, not sorry to give a proof that I was advancing in my studies.

"There, again, you allow your dictionary and your priest to mislead you. These terms, when used by a Russian, cover much more than we understand by them, and those who use them most frequently have generally a special tenderness for all kinds of malefactors. In the old times malefactors were popularly believed to be bad, dangerous people; but it has been lately discovered that this is a delusion. A young proprietor who lives not far off assures me that they are the true Protestants, and the most powerful social reformers! They protest practically against those imperfections of social organisation of which they are the involuntary victims. The feeble, characterless man quietly submits to his chains; the bold, generous, strong man breaks his fetters, and helps others to do the same. A very ingenious defence of all kinds of rascality, isn't it?"

"Well, it is a theory that might certainly be carried too

far, and might easily lead to very inconvenient conclusions; but I am not sure that, theoretically speaking, it does not contain a certain element of truth. It ought at least to foster that charity which we are enjoined to practise towards all men. But perhaps 'all men' does not include publicans and sinners?"

On hearing these words, Karl Karl'itch turned to me, and every feature of his honest German face expressed the most undisguised astonishment. "Are you, too, a Nihilist?" he inquired, as soon as he had partially recovered his breath.

"I really don't know what a Nihilist is, but I may assure you that I am not an 'ist' of any kind. What is a Nihilist?"

"If you live long in Russia you'll learn that without my telling you.* As I was saying, I am not at all afraid of the peasants citing me before the justice. They know better now. If they gave me too much trouble I could starve their cattle."

"Yes, when you catch them in your fields," I remarked, taking no notice of the abrupt turn which he had given to the conversation.

"I can do it without that. You must know that, by the Emancipation Law, the peasants received arable land, but they received little or no pasturage. I have the whip hand of them there!"

The remarks of Karl Karl'itch on men and things were to me always interesting, for he was a shrewd observer, and displayed occasionally a pleasant, dry humour. But I very soon discovered that his opinions were not to be accepted without reserve. His strong, inflexible Teutonic nature often prevented him from judging impartially. He had no sympathy with the men and the institutions around him, and consequently he was unable to see things from the inside. The specks and blemishes on the surface he perceived clearly enough, but he had no knowledge of the secret, deep-rooted causes by which these specks and blemishes were produced. The simple fact that a man was a Russian satisfactorily accounted, in his opinion, for any kind of moral deformity; and his knowledge turned

* The explanation will be found in Chapter XXXIV.

out to be by no means so extensive as I had at first supposed. Though he had been many years in the country, he knew very little about the life of the peasants beyond that small part of it which concerned directly his own interests and those of his employer. Of the communal organisation, domestic life, religious beliefs, ceremonial practices, and nomadic habits of his humble neighbours, he knew little, and the little he happened to know was far from accurate. In order to gain a knowledge of these matters it would be better, I perceived, to consult the priest, or, better still, the peasants themselves. But to do this it would be necessary to understand easily and speak fluently the colloquial language, and I was still very far from having acquired the requisite proficiency.

Even for one who possesses a natural facility for acquiring foreign tongues, the learning of Russian is by no means an easy task. Though it is essentially an Aryan language like our own, and contains only a slight intermixture of Tartar words—such as *bashlyk* (a hood), *kalpak* (a nightcap), *arbuz* (a water-melon)—it has certain sounds unknown to West-European ears, and difficult for West-European tongues, and its roots, though in great part derived from the same original stock as those of the Græco-Latin and Teutonic languages, are generally not at all easily recognised. As an illustration of this, take the Russian word *otéts*. Strange as it may at first sight appear, this word is merely another form of our word *father*, of the German *vater*, and of the French *père*. The syllable *ets* is the ordinary Russian termination denoting the agent, corresponding to the English and German ending *er*, as we see in such words as—*kup-ets* (a buyer), *plov-ets* (a swimmer), and many others. The root *ot* is a mutilated form of *vot*, as we see in the word *otchina* (a paternal inheritance), which is frequently written *votchina*. Now *vot* is evidently the same root as the German *vat* in *vater*, and the English *fath* in *father*. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

All this is simple enough, and goes to prove the fundamental identity, or rather the community of origin, of the Slav and Teutonic languages; but it will be readily understood that etymological analogies so carefully disguised are

of little practical use in helping us to acquire a foreign tongue. Besides this, the grammatical forms and constructions in Russian are very peculiar, and present a great many strange irregularities. As an illustration of this we may take the future tense. The Russian verb has commonly a simple and a frequentative future. The latter is always regularly formed by means of an auxiliary with the infinitive, as in English, but the former is constructed in a variety of ways, for which no rule can be given, so that the simple future of each individual verb must be learned by a pure effort of memory. In many verbs it is formed by prefixing a preposition, but it is impossible to determine by rule which preposition should be used. Thus *idú* (I go) becomes in the future tense *poidú; pishú* (I write) becomes *napishú; pyú* (I drink) becomes *vuipyú*, and so on.

Closely akin to the difficulties of pronunciation is the difficulty of accentuating the proper syllable. In this respect Russian is like Greek; you can rarely tell a priori on what syllable the accent falls. But it is more puzzling than Greek, for two reasons: firstly, it is not customary to print Russian with accents; and secondly, no one has yet been able to lay down precise rules for the transposition of the accent in the various inflections of the same word. Of this latter peculiarity, let one illustration suffice. The word *ruká* (hand) has the accent on the last syllable, but in the accusative (*rúku*) the accent goes back to the first syllable. It must not, however, be assumed that in all words of this type a similar transposition takes place. The word *bedá* (misfortune), for instance, as well as very many others, always retains the accent on the last syllable.

These and many similar difficulties, which need not be here enumerated, can be mastered only by long practice. Serious as they are, they need not frighten anyone who is in the habit of learning foreign tongues. The ear and the tongue gradually become familiar with the peculiarities of inflection and accentuation, and practice fulfils the same function as abstract rules.

It is commonly supposed that Russians have been endowed by Nature with a peculiar linguistic talent. Their own language, it is said, is so difficult that they have no

difficulty in acquiring others. This common belief requires, as it seems to me, some explanation. That highly educated Russians are better linguists than the educated classes of Western Europe there can be no possible doubt, for they almost always speak French, and often English and German also. The question, however, is whether this is the result of a psychological peculiarity, or of other causes. Now, without venturing to deny the existence of a natural faculty, I should say that the other causes have at least exercised a powerful influence. Any Russian who wishes to be regarded as *civilisé* must possess at least one foreign language; and, as a consequence of this, the children of the upper classes are always taught at least French in their infancy. Many households comprise a German nurse, a French tutor, and an English governess; and the children thus become accustomed from their earliest years to the use of these three languages. Besides this, Russian is phonetically very rich, and contains nearly all the sounds which are to be found in West-European tongues. Perhaps on the whole it would be well to apply here the Darwinian theory, and suppose that the Russian noblesse, having been obliged for several generations to acquire foreign languages, have gradually developed a hereditary polyglot talent.

Several circumstances concurred to assist me in my efforts, during my voluntary exile, to acquire at least such a knowledge of the language as would enable me to converse freely with the peasantry. In the first place, my reverend teacher was an agreeable, kindly, talkative man, who took a great delight in telling interminable stories, quite independently of any satisfaction which he might derive from the consciousness of their being understood and appreciated. Even when walking alone he was always muttering something to an imaginary listener. A stranger meeting him on such occasions might have supposed that he was holding converse with unseen spirits, though his broad muscular form and rubicund face militated strongly against such a supposition; but no man, woman, or child living within a radius of ten miles would ever have fallen into this mistake. Every one in the neighbourhood knew that "Bátushka" (papa), as he was familiarly called, was too prosaical,

practical a man to see things ethereal, that he was an irrepressible talker, and that when he could not conveniently find an audience he created one by his own imagination. This peculiarity of his rendered me good service. Though for some time I understood very little of what he said, and very often misplaced the positive and negative monosyllables which I hazarded occasionally by way of encouragement, he talked vigorously all the same. Like all garrulous people, he was constantly repeating himself; but to this I did not object, for the custom—however disagreeable in ordinary society—was for me highly beneficial, and when I had already heard a story once or twice before, it was much easier for me to assume at the proper moment the requisite expression of countenance.

Another fortunate circumstance was that at Iványovka there were no distractions, so that the whole of the day and a great part of the night could be devoted to study. My chief amusement was an occasional walk in the fields with Karl Karl'itch; and even this mild form of dissipation could not always be obtained, for as soon as rain had fallen it was difficult to go beyond the veranda—the mud precluding the possibility of a constitutional. The nearest approach to excitement was mushroom gathering; and in this occupation my inability to distinguish the edible from the poisonous species made my efforts unacceptable. We lived so "far from the madding crowd" that its din scarcely reached our ears. A week or ten days might pass without our receiving any intelligence from the outer world. The nearest post-office was in the district town, and with that distant point we had no regular system of communication. Letters and newspapers remained there till called for, and were brought to us intermittently when some one of our neighbours happened to pass that way. Current history was thus administered to us in big doses.

One very big dose I remember well. For a much longer time than usual no volunteer letter-carrier had appeared, and the delay was more than usually tantalising, because it was known that war had broken out between France and Germany. At last a big bundle of a daily paper called the *Golos* was brought to me. Impatient to learn whether any

great battle had been fought, I began by examining the latest number, and stumbled at once on an article headed, "Latest Intelligence: the Emperor at Wilhelmshöhe!!!" The large type in which the heading was printed and the three marks of exclamation showed plainly that the article was very important. I began to read with avidity, but was utterly mystified. What emperor was this? Probably the Tsar or the Emperor of Austria, for there was no German Emperor in those days. But no! It was evidently the Emperor of the French. And how did Napoleon get to Wilhelmshöhe? The French must have broken through the Rhine defences, and pushed far into Germany. But no! As I read further, I found this theory equally untenable. It turned out that the Emperor was surrounded by Germans, and—a prisoner! In order to solve the mystery, I had to go back to the preceding numbers of the paper, and learned, at a sitting, all about the successive German victories, the defeat and capitulation of Macmahon's army at Sedan, and the other great events of that momentous time. The impression produced can scarcely be realised by those who have always imbibed current history in the homæopathic doses administered by the morning and evening daily papers.

By the useful loquacity of my teacher and the possibility of devoting all my time to my linguistic studies, I made such rapid progress in the acquisition of the language that I was able after a few weeks to understand much of what was said to me, and to express myself in a vague, roundabout way. In the latter operation I was much assisted by a peculiar faculty of divination which the Russians possess in a high degree. If a foreigner succeeds in expressing about one-fourth of an idea, the Russian peasant can generally fill up the remaining three-fourths from his own intuition.

As my powers of comprehension increased, my long conversations with the priest became more and more instructive. At first his remarks and stories had for me simply a philological interest, but gradually I perceived that his talk contained a great deal of solid, curious information regarding himself and the class to which he belonged—information of a kind not commonly found in grammatical exercises. Some of this I now propose to communicate to the reader.

CHAPTER IV

THE VILLAGE PRIEST

In formal introductions it is customary to pronounce in a more or less inaudible voice the names of the two persons introduced. Circumstances compel me in the present case to depart from received custom. The truth is, I do not know the names of the two people whom I wish to bring together! The reader who knows his own name will readily pardon one-half of my ignorance, but he may naturally expect that I should know the name of a man with whom I profess to be acquainted, and with whom I daily held long conversations during a period of several months. Strange as it may seem, I do not. During all the time of my sojourn in Ivánovka I never heard him addressed or spoken of otherwise than as "Bátushka." Now "Bátushka" is not a name at all. It is simply the diminutive form of an obsolete word meaning "father," and is usually applied to all village priests. The *ushka* is a common diminutive termination, and the root *Bat* is evidently the same as that which appears in the Latin *pater*.

Though I do not happen to know what Bátushka's family name was, I can communicate two curious facts concerning it: he had not possessed it in his childhood, and it was not the same as his father's.

The reader whose intuitive powers have been preternaturally sharpened by a long course of sensation novels will probably leap to the conclusion that Bátushka was a mysterious individual, very different from what he seemed—either the illegitimate son of some great personage, or a man of high birth who had committed some great sin, and who now sought oblivion and expiation in the humble duties of a parish priest. Let me dispel at once all delusions of this kind. Bátushka was actually as well as legally the legitimate son of an ordinary parish priest, who was still living about

twenty miles off, and for many generations all his paternal and maternal ancestors, male and female, had belonged to the priestly caste. He was thus a Levite of the purest water, and thoroughly Levitical in his character. Though he knew by experience something about the weakness of the flesh, he had never committed any sins of the heroic kind, and had no reason to conceal his origin. The curious facts above stated were simply the result of a peculiar custom which exists among the Russian clergy. According to this custom, when a boy enters the seminary he receives from the Bishop a new family name. The name may be Bogoslavski, from a word signifying "Theology," or Bogolubov, "the love of God," or some similar term; or it may be derived from the name of the boy's native village, or from any other word which the Bishop thinks fit to choose. I know of one instance where a Bishop chose two French words for the purpose. He had intended to call the boy *Velikoselski*, after his native place, Velikoe Seló, which means "big village"; but finding that there was already a Velikoselski in the seminary, and being in a facetious frame of mind, he called the new-comer Grandvillageski—a word that may perhaps sorely puzzle some philologist of the future.

My reverend teacher was a tall, muscular man of about forty years of age, with a full dark-brown beard, and long lank hair falling over his shoulders. The visible parts of his dress consisted of three articles—a dingy-brown robe of coarse material buttoned closely at the neck and descending to the ground, a wideawake hat, and a pair of large, heavy boots. As to the esoteric parts of his attire, I refrained from making investigations. His life had been an uneventful one. At an early age he had been sent to the seminary in the chief town of the province, and had made for himself the reputation of a good average scholar. "The seminary of that time," he used to say to me, referring to that part of his life, "was not what it is now. Nowadays the teachers talk about humanitarianism, and the boys would think that a crime had been committed against human dignity if one of them happened to be flogged. But they don't consider that human dignity is at all affected by their getting drunk,

and going to—to—to places that I never went to. I was flogged often enough, and I don't think that I am a worse man on that account; and though I never heard then anything about pedagogical science that they talk so much about now, I'll read a bit of Latin yet with the best of them.

"When my studies were finished," said Bátushka, continuing the simple story of his life, "the Bishop found a wife for me, and I succeeded her father, who was then an old man. In that way I became parish priest of Ivánovka, and I have remained here ever since. It is a hard life, for the parish is big, and my bit of land is not very fertile; but, praise be to God! I am healthy and strong, and get on well enough."

"You said that the Bishop found a wife for you," I remarked. "I suppose, therefore, that he was a great friend of yours."

"Not at all. The Bishop does the same for all the seminarists who wish to be ordained: it is an important part of his pastoral duties."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed in astonishment. "Surely that is carrying the system of paternal government a little too far. Why should his Reverence meddle with things that don't concern him?"

"But these matters do concern him. He is the natural protector of widows and orphans, especially among the clergy of his own diocese. When a parish priest dies, what is to become of his wife and daughters?"

Not perceiving clearly the exact bearing of these last remarks, I ventured to suggest that priests ought to economise in view of future contingencies.

"It is easy to speak," replied Bátushka: "'A story is soon told,' as the old proverb has it, 'but a thing is not soon done.' How are we to economise? Even without saving we have the greatest difficulty to make the two ends meet."

"Then the widow and daughters might work and gain a livelihood."

"What, pray, could they work at?" asked Bátushka, and paused for a reply. Seeing that I had none to offer

him, he continued, "Even the house and land belong not to them, but to the new priest."

"If that position occurred in a novel," I said, "I could foretell what would happen. The author would make the new priest fall in love with and marry one of the daughters, and then the whole family, including the mother-in-law, would live happily ever afterwards."

"That is exactly how the Bishop arranges the matter. What the novelist does with the puppets of his imagination, the Bishop does with real beings of flesh and blood. As a rational being he cannot leave things to chance. Besides this, he must arrange the matter before the young man takes orders, because, by the rules of the Church, the marriage cannot take place after the ceremony of ordination. When the affair is arranged before the charge becomes vacant, the old priest can die with the pleasant consciousness that his family is provided for."

"Well, Bátushka, you certainly put the matter in a very plausible way, but there seem to be two flaws in the analogy. The novelist can make two people fall in love with each other, and make them live happily together with the mother-in-law, but that—with all due respect to his Reverence be it said—is beyond the power of a Bishop."

"I am not sure," said Bátushka, avoiding the point of the objection, "that love marriages are always the happiest ones; and as to the mother-in-law, there are—or at least there were until the emancipation of the serfs—a mother-in-law and several daughters-in-law in almost every peasant household."

"And does harmony generally reign in peasant households?"

"That depends upon the head of the house. If he is a man of the right sort, he can keep the womenfolk in order." This remark was made in an energetic tone, with the evident intention of assuring me that the speaker was himself "a man of the right sort"; but I did not attribute much importance to it, for I have occasionally heard henpecked husbands talk in this grandiloquent way when their wives were out of hearing. Altogether I was by no means convinced that the system of providing for the widows and orphans of the clergy

by means of *mariages de convenance* was a good one, but I determined to suspend my judgment until I should obtain fuller information.

An additional bit of evidence came to me a week or two later. One morning, on going into the priest's house, I found that he had a friend with him—the priest of a village some fifteen miles off. Before we had got through the ordinary conventional remarks about the weather and the crops, a peasant drove up to the door in his cart with a message that an old peasant was dying in a neighbouring village, and desired the last consolations of religion. Bátushka was thus obliged to leave us, and his friend and I agreed to stroll leisurely in the direction of the village to which he was going, so as to meet him on his way home. The harvest was already finished, so that our road, after emerging from the village, lay through stubble-fields. Beyond this we entered the pine forest, and by the time we had reached this point I had succeeded in leading the conversation to the subject of clerical marriages.

"I have been thinking a good deal on this subject," I said, "and I should very much like to know your opinion about the system."

My new acquaintance was a tall, lean, black-haired man, with a sallow complexion and vinegar aspect—evidently one of those unhappy mortals who are intended by Nature to take a pessimistic view of all things, and to point out to their fellows the deep shadows of human life. I was not at all surprised, therefore, when he replied in a deep, decided tone, "Bad, very bad—utterly bad!"

The way in which these words were pronounced left no doubt as to the opinion of the speaker, but I was desirous of knowing on what that opinion was founded—more especially as I seemed to detect in the tone a note of personal grievance. My answer was shaped accordingly.

"I suspected that; but in the discussions which I have had I have always been placed at a disadvantage, not being able to adduce any definite facts in support of my opinion."

"You may congratulate yourself on being unable to find any in your own experience. A mother-in-law living in the

house does not conduce to domestic harmony. I don't know how it is in your country, but so it is with us."

I hastened to assure him that this was not a peculiarity of Russia.

"I know it only too well," he continued. "My mother-in-law lived with me for some years, and I was obliged at last to insist on her going to another son-in-law."

"Rather selfish conduct towards your brother-in-law," I said to myself, and then added audibly, "I hope you have thus solved the difficulty satisfactorily."

"Not at all. Things are worse now than they were. I agreed to pay her three roubles a month, and have regularly fulfilled my promise, but lately she has thought it not enough, and she made a complaint to the Bishop. Last week I went to him to defend myself, but as I had not money enough for all the officials in the Consistory, I could not obtain justice. My mother-in-law had made all sorts of absurd accusations against me, and consequently I was laid under an inhibition for six weeks!"

"And what is the effect of an inhibition?"

"The effect is that I cannot perform the ordinary rites of our religion. It is really very unjust," he added, assuming an indignant tone, "and very annoying. Think of all the hardship and inconvenience to which it gives rise."

As I thought of the hardship and inconvenience to which the parishioners must be exposed through the inconsiderate conduct of the old mother-in-law, I could not but sympathise with my new acquaintance's indignation. My sympathy was, however, somewhat cooled when I perceived that I was on a wrong tack, and that the priest was looking at the matter from an entirely different point of view.

"You see," he said, "it is a most unfortunate time of year. The peasants have gathered in their harvest, and can give of their abundance. There are merrymakings and marriages, besides the ordinary deaths and baptisms. Altogether I shall lose by the thing more than a hundred roubles!"

I confess I was a little shocked on hearing the priest thus speak of his sacred functions as if they were an ordinary marketable commodity, and talk of the inhibition as a push-

ing undertaker might talk of sanitary improvements. My surprise was caused not by the fact that he regarded the matter from a pecuniary point of view—for I was old enough to know that clerical human nature is not altogether insensible to pecuniary considerations—but by the fact that he should thus undisguisedly express his opinions to a stranger without in the least suspecting that there was anything unseemly in his way of speaking. The incident appeared to me very characteristic, but I refrained from all audible comments, lest I should inadvertently check his communicativeness. With the view of encouraging it, I professed to be very much interested, as I really was, in what he said, and I asked him how in his opinion the present unsatisfactory state of things might be remedied.

"There is but one cure," he said, with a readiness that showed he had often spoken on the theme already, "and that is freedom and publicity. We full-grown men are treated like children, and watched like conspirators. If I wish to preach a sermon—not that I often wish to do such a thing, but there are occasions when it is advisable—I am expected to show it first to the Blagotchinny, and——"

"I beg your pardon, who is the Blagotchinny?"

"The Blagotchinny is a parish priest, who is in direct relations with the Consistory of the Province, and who is supposed to exercise a strict supervision over all the other parish priests of his district. He acts as the spy of the Consistory, which is filled with greedy, shameless officials, deaf to anyone who does not come provided with a handful of roubles. The Bishop may be a good, well-intentioned man, but he always sees and acts through these worthless subordinates. Besides this, the Bishops and heads of monasteries, who monopolise the higher places in the ecclesiastical Administration, all belong to the Black Clergy—that is to say, they are all monks—and consequently cannot understand our wants. How can they, on whom celibacy is imposed by the rules of the Church, understand the position of a parish priest who has to bring up a family and to struggle with domestic cares of every kind? What they do is to take all the comfortable places for themselves, and leave us all the hard work. The monasteries are rich

enough, and you see how poor we are. Perhaps you have heard that the parish priests extort money from the peasants —refusing to perform the rites of baptism or burial until a considerable sum has been paid. It is only too true, but who is to blame? The priest must live and bring up his family, and you cannot imagine the humiliations to which he has to submit in order to gain a scanty pittance. I know it by experience. When I make the periodical visitation I can see that the peasants grudge every handful of rye and every egg that they give me. I can overhear their sneers as I go away, and I know they have many sayings such as, 'The priest takes from the living and from the dead.' Many of them fasten their doors, pretending to be away from home, and do not even take the precaution of keeping silent till I am out of hearing."

"You surprise me," I said, in reply to the last part of this long tirade; "I have always heard that the Russians are a very religious people—at least, the lower classes."

"So they are; but the peasantry are poor and heavily taxed. They set great importance on the sacraments, and observe rigorously the fasts, which comprise nearly a half of the year; but they show very little respect for their priests, who are almost as poor as themselves."

"But I do not see clearly how you propose to remedy this state of things."

"By freedom and publicity, as I said before." The worthy man seemed to have learned this formula by rote. "First of all, our wants must be made known. In some provinces there have been attempts to do this by means of provincial assemblies of the clergy, but these efforts have always been strenuously opposed by the Consistories, whose members fear publicity above all things. But in order to have publicity we must have more freedom."

Here followed a long discourse on freedom and publicity, which seemed to me very confused. So far as I could understand the argument, there was a good deal of reasoning in a circle. Freedom was necessary in order to get publicity, and publicity was necessary in order to get freedom; and the practical result would be that the clergy would enjoy bigger salaries and more popular respect. We had only

got thus far in the investigation of the subject, when our conversation was interrupted by the rumbling of a peasant's cart. In a few seconds our friend Bátushka appeared, and the conversation took a different turn.

Since that time I have frequently spoken on this subject with competent authorities, and nearly all have admitted that the present condition of the clergy is highly unsatisfactory, and that the parish priest rarely enjoys the respect of his parishioners. In a semi-official report, which I once accidentally stumbled upon when searching for material of a different kind, the facts are stated in the following plain language: "The people"—I seek to translate as literally as possible—"do not respect the clergy, but persecute them with derision and reproaches, and feel them to be a burden. In nearly all the popular comic stories the priest, or his wife, or his labourer is held up to ridicule, and in all the proverbs and popular sayings where the clergy are mentioned it is always with derision. The people shun the clergy, and have recourse to them not from the inner impulse of conscience, but from necessity. . . . And why do the people not respect the clergy? Because they form a class apart; because, having received a false kind of education, they do not introduce into the life of the people the teaching of the Spirit, but remain in the mere dead forms of outward ceremonial, at the same time despising these forms even to blasphemy; because the clergy themselves continually present examples of want of respect to religion, and transform the service of God into a profitable trade. Can the people respect the clergy when they hear how one priest stole money from below the pillow of a dying man at the moment of confession, how another was publicly dragged out of a house of ill-fame, how a third christened a dog, how a fourth whilst officiating at the Easter service was dragged by the hair from the altar by the deacon? Is it possible for the people to respect priests who spend their time in the gin-shop, write fraudulent petitions, fight with the cross in their hands, and abuse each other in bad language at the altar?

"One might fill several pages with examples of this kind—in each instance naming the time and place—without overstepping the boundaries of the province of Nizhni-Novgorod.

Is it possible for the people to respect the clergy when they see everywhere amongst them simony, carelessness in performing the religious rites, and disorder in administering the sacraments? Is it possible for the people to respect the clergy when they see that truth has disappeared from them, and that the Consistories, guided in their decisions not by rules, but by personal friendship and bribery, destroy in them the last remains of truthfulness? If we add to all this the false certificates which the clergy give to those who do not wish to partake of the Eucharist, the dues illegally extracted from the Old Ritualists, the conversion of the altar into a source of revenue, the giving of churches to priests' daughters as a dowry, and similar phenomena, the question as to whether the people can respect the clergy requires no answer."

As these words were written by an orthodox Russian,* celebrated for his extensive and intimate knowledge of Russian provincial life, and were addressed in all seriousness to a member of the Imperial family, we may safely assume that they contain a considerable amount of truth. The reader must not, however, imagine that all Russian priests are of the kind above referred to. Many of them are honest, respectable, well-intentioned men, who conscientiously fulfil their humble duties, and strive hard to procure a good education for their children. If they have less learning, culture, and refinement than the Roman Catholic priesthood, they have at the same time infinitely less fanaticism, less spiritual pride, and less intolerance towards the adherents of other faiths.

Both the good and the bad qualities of the Russian priesthood at the present time can be easily explained by its past history, and by certain peculiarities of the national character.

The Russian White Clergy—that is to say, the parish priests, as distinguished from the monks, who are called the Black Clergy—have had a curious history. In primitive times they were drawn from all classes of the population, and freely elected by the parishioners. When a man was elected by the popular vote, he was presented to the Bishop, and if he was found to be a fit and proper person for the office, he

* Mr. Melnikof, in a Secret Report to the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaievitch.

was at once ordained. But this custom early fell into disuse. The Bishops, finding that many of the candidates presented were illiterate peasants, gradually assumed the right of appointing the priests, with or without the consent of the parishioners; and their choice generally fell on the sons of the clergy as the men best fitted to take orders. The creation of Bishops' schools, afterwards called seminaries, in which the sons of the clergy were educated, naturally led, in the course of time, to the total exclusion of the other classes. The policy of the civil Government led to the same end. Peter the Great laid down the principle that every subject should in some way serve the State—the nobles as officers in the army or navy, or as officials in the civil service; the clergy as ministers of religion; and the lower classes as soldiers, sailors, or taxpayers. Of these three classes, the clergy had by far the lightest burdens, and consequently many nobles and peasants would willingly have entered its ranks. But this species of desertion the Government could not tolerate, and accordingly the priesthood was surrounded by a legal barrier, which prevented all outsiders from entering it. Thus, by the combined efforts of the ecclesiastical and the civil Administration, the clergy became a separate class or caste, legally and actually incapable of mingling with the other classes of the population.

The simple fact that the clergy became an exclusive caste, with a peculiar character, peculiar habits, and peculiar ideals, would in itself have had a prejudicial influence on the priesthood; but this was not all. The caste increased in numbers by the process of natural reproduction much more rapidly than the offices to be filled, so that the supply of priests and deacons soon far exceeded the demand; and the disproportion between supply and demand became every year greater and greater. In this way was formed an ever-increasing clerical Proletariat, which—as is always the case with a Proletariat of any kind—gravitated towards the towns. In vain the Government issued ukazes prohibiting the priests from quitting their places of domicile, and treated as vagrants and runaways those who disregarded the prohibition; in vain successive sovereigns endeavoured to diminish the number of these supernumeraries by drafting them wholesale into

the army. In Moscow, St. Petersburg, and all the larger towns the cry was "Still they come!" Every morning, in the Kremlin of Moscow, a large crowd of them assembled for the purpose of being hired to officiate in the private chapels of the rich nobles, and a great deal of hard bargaining took place between the priests and the lackeys sent to hire them—conducted in the same spirit, and in nearly the same forms, as that which simultaneously took place in the bazaar close by between extortionate traders and thrifty housewives. "Listen to me," a priest would say, as an ultimatum, to a lackey who was trying to beat down the price, "if you don't give me seventy-five kopeks without further ado, I'll take a bite of this roll, and that will be an end to it!" And that would have been an end to the bargaining, for, according to the rules of the Church, a priest cannot officiate after breaking his fast. The ultimatum, however, could be used with effect only to country servants who had recently come to town. A sharp lackey, experienced in this kind of diplomacy, would have laughed at the threat, and replied coolly, "Bite away, Bátushka; I can find plenty more of your sort!" Amusing scenes of this kind I have heard described by old people who professed to have been eye-witnesses.

The condition of the priests who remained in the villages was not much better. Those of them who were fortunate enough to find places were raised at least above the fear of absolute destitution, but their position was by no means enviable. They received little consideration or respect from the peasantry, and still less from the nobles. When the church was situated not on the State Domains, but on a private estate, they were practically under the power of the proprietor—almost as completely as his serfs; and sometimes that power was exercised in a most humiliating and shameful way. I have heard, for instance, of one priest who was ducked in a pond on a cold winter day for the amusement of the proprietor and his guests—choice spirits, of rough, jovial temperament; and of another who, having neglected to take off his hat as he passed the proprietor's house, was put into a barrel and rolled down a hill into the river at the bottom!

In citing these incidents, I do not at all mean to imply that they represent the relations which usually existed between proprietors and village priests, for I am quite aware that wanton cruelty was not among the ordinary vices of Russian serf-owners. My object in mentioning the incidents is to show how a brutal proprietor—and it must be admitted that there were not a few brutal individuals in the class—could maltreat a priest without much danger of being called to account for his conduct. Of course such conduct was an offence in the eyes of the criminal law; but the criminal law of that time was very short-sighted, and strongly disposed to close its eyes completely when the offender was an influential proprietor. Had the incidents reached the ears of the Emperor Nicholas, he would probably have ordered the culprit to be summarily and severely punished; but, as the Russian proverb has it, "Heaven is high, and the Tsar is far off." A village priest treated in this barbarous way could have little hope of redress, and, if he were a prudent man, he would make no attempt to obtain it; for any annoyance which he might give the proprietor by complaining to the ecclesiastical authorities would be sure to be paid back to him with interest in some indirect way.

The sons of the clergy who did not succeed in finding regular sacerdotal employment were in a still worse position. Many of them served as scribes or subordinate officials in the public offices, where they commonly eked out their scanty salaries by unblushing extortion and pilfering. Those who did not succeed in gaining even modest employment of this kind had to keep off starvation by less lawful means, and not unfrequently found their way into the prisons or to Siberia.

In judging of the Russian priesthood of the present time, we must call to mind this demoralising atmosphere to which it was so long condemned, and we must also take into consideration the spirit which has been for centuries predominant in the Eastern Church—I mean the strong tendency both in the clergy and in the laity to attribute an inordinate importance to the ceremonial element of religion. Primitive mankind is everywhere and always disposed to regard religion as simply a mass of mysterious rites, which have a secret

magical power of averting evil in this world and securing felicity in the next. To this general rule the Russian peasantry are no exception, and the Russian Church has not done all it might have done to eradicate this conception and to bring religion into closer association with ordinary morality. Hence such incidents as the following are still possible: A robber kills and rifles a traveller, but refrains from eating a piece of cooked meat which he finds in the cart, because it happens to be a fast-day! A peasant prepares to rob a young *attaché* of the Austrian Embassy in St. Petersburg, and ultimately kills his victim, but before going to the house he enters a church and commends his undertaking to the protection of the saints! A housebreaker, when in the act of robbing a church, finds it difficult to extract the jewels from an Icon, and makes a vow that if a certain saint assists him he will place a rouble's-worth of tapers before the saint's image! These facts are within the memory of the last generation. I knew the young *attaché*, and saw him a few days before his death.

All these are of course extreme cases, but they illustrate a tendency which in its milder forms is only too general amongst the Russian people—the tendency to regard religion as a mass of ceremonies which have a magical rather than a spiritual significance. The poor woman who kneels at a religious procession in order that the Icon may be carried over her head, and the rich merchant who invites the priests to bring some famous Icon to his house, illustrate this tendency in a more harmless form.

According to a popular saying, "As is the priest, so is the parish," and the converse proposition is equally true —as is the parish, so is the priest. The great majority of priests, like the great majority of men in general, content themselves with simply striving to perform what is expected of them, and their character is consequently determined to a certain extent by the ideas and conceptions of their parishioners. This will become more apparent if we contrast the Russian priest with the Protestant pastor.

According to Protestant conceptions, the village pastor is a man of grave demeanour and exemplary conduct, and possesses a certain amount of education and refinement. He

ought to expound weekly to his flock, in simple, impressive words, the great truths of Christianity, and exhort his hearers to walk in the paths of righteousness. Besides this, he is expected to comfort the afflicted, to assist the needy, to counsel those who are harassed with doubts, and to admonish those who openly stray from the narrow path. Such is the ideal in the popular mind, and pastors generally seek to realise it, if not in very deed, at least in appearance. The Russian priest, on the contrary, has no such ideal set before him by his parishioners. He is expected merely to conform to certain observances, and to perform punctiliously the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Church. If he does this without practising extortion, his parishioners are quite satisfied. He rarely preaches or exhorts, and too often he neither has nor seeks to have a moral influence over his flock. I have occasionally heard of Russian priests who approach to what I have termed the Protestant ideal, and I have even seen one or two of them, but I fear they are not numerous.

In the above contrast I have accidentally omitted one important feature. The Protestant clergy have in all countries rendered valuable service to the cause of popular education. The reason of this is not difficult to find. In order to be a good Protestant it is necessary to "search the Scriptures," and to do this one must be able at least to read. To be a good member of the Greek Orthodox Church, on the contrary, according to popular conceptions, the reading of the Scriptures is not necessary, and therefore primary education has not in the eyes of the Greek Orthodox priest the same importance which it has in the eyes of the Protestant pastor.

It must be admitted that the Russian people are in a certain sense religious. They go regularly to church on Sundays and holy-days, cross themselves repeatedly when they pass a church or Icon, take the Holy Communion at stated seasons, rigorously abstain from animal food—not only on Wednesdays and Fridays, but also during Lent and the other long fasts—make occasional pilgrimages to holy shrines, and, in a word, fulfil punctiliously the ceremonial observances which they suppose necessary for salvation. But here their religiousness ends. They are generally pro-

foundly ignorant of religious doctrine, and know little or nothing of Holy Writ. A peasant, it is said, was once asked by a priest if he could name the three Persons of the Trinity, and replied without a moment's hesitation, "How can one not know that, Bátushka? Of course it is the Saviour, the Mother of God, and Saint Nicholas the miracle-worker!"

That answer represents fairly enough the theological attainments of a very large section of the peasantry. The anecdote is so often repeated that it is probably an invention, but it is not a calumny. Of theology and of what Protestants term the "inner religious life," the orthodox Russian peasant—of Dissenters, to whom these remarks do not apply, I shall speak later—has no conception. For him the ceremonial part of religion suffices, and he has the most unbounded, childlike confidence in the saving efficacy of the rites which he practises. If he has been baptised in infancy, has regularly observed the fasts, has annually partaken of the Holy Communion, and has just confessed and received extreme unction, he feels death approach with the most perfect tranquillity. He is tormented with no doubts as to the efficacy of faith or works, and has no fears that his past life may possibly have rendered him unfit for eternal felicity. Like a man in a sinking ship who has buckled on his life-preserver, he feels perfectly secure. With no fear for the future and little regret for the present or the past, he awaits calmly the dread summons, and dies with a resignation which a Stoic philosopher might envy.

In the above remarks I have used the word Icon, and perhaps the reader may not clearly understand the word. Let me explain then, briefly, what an Icon is—a very necessary explanation, for the Icons play an important part in the religious observances of the Russian people.

Icons are pictorial, usually half-length, representations of the Saviour, of the Madonna, or of a saint, executed in archaic Byzantine style, on a yellow or gold ground, and varying in size from a square inch to several square feet. Very often the whole picture, with the exception of the face and hands of the figure, is covered with a metal plaque, embossed so as to represent the form of the figure and the

drapery. When this plaque is not used, the crown and costume are often adorned with pearls and other precious stones—sometimes of great price.

In respect of religious significance, Icons are of two kinds: simple, and miraculous or miracle-working (*tchudotvorny*). The former are manufactured in enormous quantities—chiefly in the province of Vladimir, where whole villages are employed in this kind of work—and are to be found in every Russian house, from the hut of the peasant to the palace of the Emperor. They are generally placed high up in a corner facing the door, and good orthodox Christians on entering bow in that direction, making at the same time the sign of the cross. Before and after meals the same short ceremony is always performed. On the eve of fête days a small lamp is kept burning before at least one of the Icons in the house.

The wonder-working Icons are comparatively few in number, and are always carefully preserved in a church or chapel. They are commonly believed to have been "not made with hands," and to have appeared in a miraculous way. A monk, or it may be a common mortal, has a vision, in which he is informed that he may find a miraculous Icon in such a place, and on going to the spot indicated he finds it, sometimes buried, sometimes hanging on a tree. The sacred treasure is then removed to a church, and the news spreads like wildfire through the district. Thousands flock to prostrate themselves before the heaven-sent picture, and some are healed of their diseases—a fact that plainly indicates its miracle-working power. The whole affair is then officially reported to the Most Holy Synod, the highest ecclesiastical authority in Russia, in order that the existence of the miracle-working power may be fully and regularly proved. The official recognition of the fact is by no means a mere matter of form, for the Synod is well aware that wonder-working Icons are always a rich source of revenue to the monasteries where they are kept, and that zealous Superiors are consequently apt in such cases to lean to the side of credulity rather than that of over-severe criticism. A regular investigation is therefore made, and the formal recognition is not granted till the testimony of the finder

is thoroughly examined and the alleged miracles duly authenticated. If the recognition is granted, the Icon is treated with the greatest veneration, and is sure to be visited by pilgrims from far and near.

Some of the most revered Icons—as, for instance, the Kazan Madonna—have annual fête days instituted in their honour; or, more correctly speaking, the anniversary of their miraculous appearance is observed as a religious holiday. A few of them have an additional title to popular respect and veneration: that of being intimately associated with great events in the national history. The Vladimir Madonna, for example, once saved Moscow from the Tartars; the Smolensk Madonna accompanied the army in the glorious campaign against Napoleon in 1812; and when in that year it was known in Moscow that the French were advancing on the city, the people wished the Metropolitan to take the Iberian Madonna, which may still be seen near one of the gates of the Kremlin, and to lead them out armed with hatchets against the enemy.

If the Russian priests have done little to advance popular education, they have at least never intentionally opposed it. Unlike their Roman Catholic brethren, they do not hold that "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and do not fear that faith may be endangered by knowledge. Indeed, it is a remarkable fact that the Russian Church regards with profound apathy those various intellectual movements which cause serious alarm to many thoughtful Christians in Western Europe. It considers religion as something so entirely apart that its votaries do not feel the necessity of bringing their theological beliefs into logical harmony with their scientific conceptions. A man may remain a good orthodox Christian long after he has adopted scientific opinions irreconcilable with Eastern Orthodoxy, or, indeed, with dogmatic Christianity of any kind. In the confessional the priest never seeks to ferret out heretical opinions; and I can recall no instance in Russian history of a man being burnt at the stake on the demand of the ecclesiastical authorities, as so often happened in the Roman Catholic world, for his scientific views. This tolerance proceeds partly, no doubt, from the fact that the Eastern Church in general,

and the Russian Church in particular, have remained for centuries in a kind of intellectual torpor. Even such a fervent orthodox Christian as the late Ivan Aksákof perceived this absence of healthy vitality, and he did not hesitate to declare his conviction that "neither the Russian nor the Slavonic world will be resuscitated . . . so long as the Church remains in such lifelessness (*mertvennost'*), which is not a matter of chance, but the legitimate fruit of some organic defect." *

Though the unsatisfactory condition of the parochial clergy is generally recognised by the educated classes, very few people take the trouble to consider seriously how it might be improved. During the Reform enthusiasm which raged for some years after the Crimean War ecclesiastical affairs were entirely overlooked. Many of the reformers of those days were so very "advanced" that religion in all its forms seemed to them an old-world superstition which tended to retard rather than accelerate social progress, and which consequently should be allowed to die as tranquilly as possible; whilst the men of more moderate views found they had enough to do in emancipating the serfs and reforming the corrupt civil and judicial Administration. During the subsequent reactionary period, which culminated in the reign of the Emperor Alexander III., much more attention was devoted to Church matters, and it came to be recognised in official circles that something ought to be done for the parish clergy in the way of improving their material condition so as to increase their moral influence. With this object in view, M. Pobêdonostsev, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, induced the Government in 1893 to make a State grant of about 6,500,000 roubles, which should be increased every year, but the sum was very inadequate, and a large portion of it was devoted to purposes of political propaganda in the form of maintaining Greek Orthodox priests in districts where the population was Protestant or Roman Catholic. Consequently, of the 35,865 parishes which Russia contained, only 18,936, or a little more than one-half, were enabled to benefit by the grant. In an

* Solovyov. Otcherki iz istorii Russkoi Literatury XIX. vêka. St. Petersburg, 1903, p. 269.

optimistic, semi-official statement published as late as 1896 it is admitted that "the means for the support of the parish clergy must even now be considered insufficient and wanting in stability, making the priests dependent on the parishioners, and thereby preventing the establishment of the necessary moral authority of the spiritual father over his flock."

In some places the needs of the Church are attended to by voluntary parish curatorships which annually raise a certain sum of money, and the way in which they distribute it is very characteristic of the Russian people, who have a profound veneration for the Church and its rites, but very little consideration for the human beings who serve at the altar. In 14,564 parishes possessing such curatorships no less than 2,500,000 roubles were collected, but of this sum 2,000,000 were expended on the maintenance and embellishment of churches, and only 174,000 were devoted to the personal wants of the clergy. According to the semi-official document from which these figures are taken, the whole body of the Russian White Clergy in 1893 numbered 99,391, of whom 42,513 were priests, 12,953 deacons, and 43,925 clerks.

In more recent observations among the parochial clergy, I have noticed premonitory symptoms of important changes. This may be illustrated by an entry in my note-book, written in a village of one of the Southern provinces, under date 30th September, 1903:—

"I have made here the acquaintance of two good specimens of the parish clergy, both excellent men in their way, but very different from each other. The elder one, Father Dmitri, is of the old school, a plain, practical man, who fulfils his duties conscientiously according to his lights, but without enthusiasm. His intellectual wants are very limited, and he devotes his attention chiefly to the practical affairs of everyday life, which he manages very successfully. He does not squeeze his parishioners unduly, but he considers that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and insists on his flock providing for his wants according to their means. At the same time he farms on his own account and attends personally to all the details of his farming opera-

tions. With the condition and doings of every member of his flock he is intimately acquainted, and, on the whole, as he never idealised anything or anybody, he has not a very high opinion of them.

"The younger priest, Father Alexander, is of a different type, and the difference may be remarked even in his external appearance. There is a look of delicacy and refinement about him, though his dress and domestic surroundings are of the plainest, and there is not a tinge of affectation in his manner. His language is less archaic and picturesque. He uses fewer Biblical and semi-Slavonic expressions—I mean expressions which belong to the antiquated language of the Church Service rather than to modern parlance—and his armoury of terse popular proverbs, which constitute such a characteristic trait of the peasantry, is less frequently drawn on. When I ask him about the present condition of the peasantry, his account does not differ substantially from that of his elder colleague, but he does not condemn their sins in the same forcible terms. He laments their shortcomings in an evangelical spirit, and has apparently aspirations for their future improvement. Admitting frankly that there is a great deal of lukewarmness among them, he hopes to revive their interest in ecclesiastical affairs and he has an idea of constituting a sort of church committee for attending to the temporal affairs of the village church and for works of charity, but he looks to influencing the younger rather than the older generation.

"His interest in his parishioners is not confined to their spiritual welfare, but extends to their material well-being. Of late an association for mutual credit has been founded in the village, and he uses his influence to induce the peasants to take advantage of the benefits it offers, both to those who are in need of a little ready money and to those who might invest their savings, instead of keeping them hidden away in an old stocking or buried in an earthen pot. The proposal to create a local agricultural society meets also with his sympathy."

If the number of parish priests of this latter type increase, the clergy may come to exercise great moral influence on the common people.

CHAPTER V

A MEDICAL CONSULTATION

In enumerating the requisites for travelling in the less frequented parts of Russia, I omitted to mention one important condition: the traveller should be always in good health, and in case of illness be ready to dispense with regular medical attendance. This I learned by experience during my stay at Ivánovka.

A man who is accustomed to be always well, and has consequently cause to believe himself exempt from the ordinary ills that flesh is heir to, naturally feels aggrieved —as if someone had inflicted upon him an undeserved injury —when he suddenly finds himself ill. At first he refuses to believe the fact, and, as far as possible, takes no notice of the disagreeable symptoms.

Such was my state of mind on being awakened early one morning by peculiar symptoms which I had never before experienced. Unwilling to admit to myself the possibility of being ill, I got up, and endeavoured to dress as usual, but very soon discovered that I was unable to stand. There was no denying the fact: not only was I ill, but the malady, whatever it was, surpassed my powers of diagnosis; and when the symptoms increased steadily all that day and the following night, I was constrained to take the humiliating decision of asking for medical advice. To my inquiries whether there was a doctor in the neighbourhood, the old servant replied, "There is not exactly a doctor, but there is a Feldsher in the village."

"And what is a Feldsher?"

"A Feldsher is . . . is a Feldsher."

"I am quite aware of that, but I should like to know what you mean by the word. What is this Feldsher?"

"He's an old soldier who dresses wounds and gives physic."

The definition did not predispose me in favour of the mysterious personage, but as there was nothing better to be had, I requested him to be sent for, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of the old servant, who evidently did not believe in *feldshers*.

In about half an hour a tall, broad-shouldered man entered, and stood bolt upright in the middle of the room in the attitude which is designated in military language by the word "Attention." His clean-shaven chin, long moustache, and closely cropped hair confirmed one part of the old servant's definition; he was unmistakably an old soldier.

"You are a Feldsher," I said, making use of the word which I had recently added to my vocabulary.

"Exactly so, your Nobility!" These words, the ordinary form of affirmation used by soldiers to their officers, were pronounced in a loud, metallic, monotonous tone, as if the speaker had been an automaton conversing with a brother automaton at a distance of twenty yards. As soon as the words were pronounced the mouth of the machine closed spasmodically, and the head, which had been momentarily turned towards me, reverted to its former position with a jerk, as if it had received the order "Eyes front!"

"Then please to sit down here, and I'll tell you about my ailment." Upon this the figure took three paces to the front, wheeled to the right-about, and sat down on the edge of the chair, retaining the position of "Attention" as nearly as the sitting posture would allow. When the symptoms had been carefully described, he knitted his brows, and after some reflection remarked, "I can give you a dose of . . ." Here followed a long word which I did not understand.

"I don't wish you to give me a dose of anything till I know what is the matter with me. Though a bit of a doctor myself, I have no idea what it is, and, pardon me, I think you are in the same position." Noticing a look of ruffled professional dignity on his face, I added, as a sedative, "It is evidently something very peculiar, so that if the first medical practitioner in the country were

present, he would probably be as much puzzled as ourselves."

The sedative had the desired effect. "Well, sir, to tell you the truth," he said, in a more human tone of voice, "I do not clearly understand what it is."

"Exactly; and therefore I think we had better leave the cure to Nature, and not interfere with her mode of treatment."

"Perhaps it would be better."

"No doubt. And now, since I have to lie here on my back, and feel rather lonely, I should like to have a talk with you. You are not in a hurry, I hope?"

"Not at all. My assistant knows where I am, and will send for me if I am required."

"So you have an assistant, have you?"

"Oh yes; a very sharp young fellow, who has been two years in the Feldsher school, and has now come here to help me and learn more by practice. That is a new way. I never was at a school of the kind myself, and had to pick up what I could when a servant in the hospital. There were, I believe, no such schools in my time. The one where my assistant learned was opened by the Zemstvo."

"The Zemstvo is the new local administration, is it not?"

"Exactly so. And I could not do without the assistant," continued my new acquaintance, gradually losing his rigidity, and showing himself, what he really was, a kindly, talkative man. "I have often to go to other villages, and almost every day a number of peasants come here. At first I had very little to do, for the people thought I was an official, and would make them pay dearly for what I should give them; but now they know that they don't require to pay, and come in great numbers. And everything I give them—though sometimes I don't clearly understand what the matter is—seems to do them good. I believe that faith does as much as physic."

"In my country," I remarked, "there is a sect of doctors who get the benefit of that principle. They give their patients two or three little balls no bigger than a pin's head, or a few drops of tasteless liquid, and they sometimes work wonderful cures."

"That system would not do for us. The Russian *muzhik* would have no faith if he swallowed merely things of that kind. What he believes in is something with a very nasty taste, and lots of it. That is his idea of a medicine; and he thinks that the more he takes of a medicine, the better chance he has of getting well. When I wish to give a peasant several doses I make him come for each separate dose, for I know that if I did not he would probably swallow the whole as soon as he was out of sight. But there is not much serious disease here—not like what I used to see on the Sheksná. You have been on the Sheksná?"

"Not yet, but I intend going there." The Sheksná is a river which falls into the Volga, and forms part of the great system of water communication connecting the Volga with the Neva.

"When you go there you will see lots of diseases. If there is a hot summer, and plenty of barges passing, something is sure to break out—typhus, or black small-pox, or Siberian plague, or something of the kind. That Siberian plague is a curious thing. Whether it really comes from Siberia, God only knows. So soon as it breaks out the horses die by dozens, and sometimes men and women are attacked, though it is not properly a human disease. They say that flies carry the poison from the dead horses to the people. The sign of it is a thing like a boil, with a dark-coloured rim. If this is cut open in time the person may recover, but if it is not the person dies. There is cholera, too, sometimes."

"What a delightful country," I said to myself, "for a young doctor who wishes to make discoveries in the science of disease!" The catalogue of diseases inhabiting this favoured region was apparently not yet complete, but it was cut short for the moment by the arrival of the assistant with the announcement that his superior was wanted.

This first interview with the *feldsher* was, on the whole, satisfactory. He had not rendered me any medical assistance, but he had helped me to pass an hour pleasantly, and had given me a little information of the kind I desired. My later interviews with him were equally agreeable. He was naturally an intelligent, observant man, who had seen a

great deal of the Russian world, and could describe graphically what he had seen. Unfortunately the horizontal position to which I was condemned prevented me from noting down at the time the interesting things which he related to me. His visits, together with those of Karl Karl'itch and of the priest, who kindly spent a great part of his time with me, helped me to while away many an hour which would otherwise have been dreary enough.

During the intervals when I was alone I devoted myself to reading—sometimes Russian history and sometimes works of fiction. The history was that of Karamzin, who may fairly be called the Russian Livy. It interested me much by the facts which it contained, but irritated me not a little by the rhetorical style in which it is written. Afterwards, when I had waded through some twenty volumes of the gigantic work of Solovyov—or Solovief, as the name is sometimes unphonetically written—which is simply a vast collection of valuable but undigested material, I was much less severe on the picturesque descriptions and ornate style of his illustrious predecessor. The first work of fiction which I read was a collection of tales by Grigorόvitch, which had been given to me by the author on my departure from St. Petersburg. These tales, descriptive of rural life in Russia, had been written, as the author afterwards admitted to me, under the influence of Dickens. Many of the little tricks and affectations which became painfully obtrusive in Dickens's later works, I had no difficulty in recognising under their Russian garb. In spite of these I found the book very pleasant reading, and received from it some new notions—to be afterwards verified, of course—about Russian peasant life.

One of these tales made a deep impression upon me, and I still remember the chief incidents. The story opens with the description of a village in late autumn. It has been raining for some time heavily, and the road has become covered with a deep layer of black mud. An old woman—a small proprietor—is sitting at home with a friend, drinking tea and trying to read the future by means of a pack of cards. This occupation is suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a female servant, who announces that she has

discovered an old man, apparently very ill, lying in one of the outhouses. The old woman goes out to see her uninvited guest, and, being of a kindly nature, prepares to have him removed to a more comfortable place and properly attended to; but her servant whispers to her that perhaps he is a vagrant, and the generous impulse is thereby checked. When it is discovered that the suspicion is only too well founded, and that the man has no passport, the old woman becomes thoroughly alarmed. Her imagination pictures to her the terrible consequences that would ensue if the police should discover that she had harboured a vagrant. All her little fortune might be extorted from her. And if the old man should happen to die in her house or farmyard! The consequences in that case might be very serious. Not only might she lose everything, but she might even be dragged to prison. At the thought of these dangers the old woman forgets her tender-heartedness, and becomes inexorable. The old man, sick unto death though he be, must leave the premises instantly. Knowing full well that he will nowhere find a refuge, he walks forth into the cold, dark, stormy night, and next morning a dead body is found at a short distance from the village.

Why this story, which was not strikingly remarkable for artistic merit, impressed me so deeply I cannot say. Perhaps it was because I was myself ill at the time, and imagined how terrible it would be to be turned out on the muddy road on a cold, wet October night. Besides this, the story interested me as illustrating the terror which the police inspired during the reign of Nicholas I. The ingenious devices which they employed for extorting money formed the subject of another sketch, which I read shortly afterwards, and which has likewise remained in my memory. The facts were as follows:—An officer of rural police, when driving on a country road, finds a dead body by the wayside. Congratulating himself on this bit of good luck, he proceeds to the nearest village, and lets the inhabitants know that all manner of legal proceedings will be taken against them, so that the supposed murderer may be discovered. The peasants are of course frightened, and give him a considerable sum of money in order that he may hush up the

affair. An ordinary officer of police would have been quite satisfied with this ransom, but this officer is not an ordinary man, and is very much in need of money; he conceives, therefore, the brilliant idea of repeating the experiment. Taking up the dead body, he takes it away in his *tarantass*, and a few hours later declares to the inhabitants of a village some miles off that some of them have been guilty of murder, and that he intends to investigate the matter thoroughly. The peasants of course pay liberally in order to escape the investigation, and the rascally officer, emboldened by success, repeats the trick in different villages until he has gathered a large sum.

Tales and sketches of this kind were very much in fashion during the years which followed the death of the great autocrat, Nicholas I., when the long pent-up indignation against his severe, repressive regime was suddenly allowed free expression, and they were still much read during the first years of my stay in the country. Now the public taste has changed. The reform enthusiasm has evaporated, and the existing administrative abuses, more refined and less comical than their predecessors, receive comparatively little attention from the satirists.

When I did not feel disposed to read, and had none of my regular visitors with me, I sometimes spent an hour or two in talking with the old man-servant who attended me. Anton was decidedly an old man, but what his age precisely was I never could discover; either he did not know himself, or he did not wish to tell me. In appearance he seemed about sixty, but from certain remarks which he made I concluded that he must be nearer seventy, though he had scarcely a grey hair on his head. As to who his father was he seemed, like the famous Topsy, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," to have no very clear ideas, but he had an advantage over Topsy with regard to his maternal ancestry. His mother had been a serf who had fulfilled for some time the functions of a lady's maid, and after the death of her mistress had been promoted to a not very clearly defined position of responsibility in the household. Anton, too, had been promoted in his time. His first function in the household had been that of assistant keeper of the tobacco-pipes, from

which humble office he had gradually risen to a position which may be roughly designated as that of butler. All this time he had been, of course, a serf, as his mother had been before him; but being naturally a man of sluggish intellect, he had never thoroughly realised the fact, and had certainly never conceived the possibility of being anything different from what he was. His master was master, and he himself was Anton, obliged to obey his master, or at least conceal disobedience—these were long the main facts in his conception of the universe, and, as philosophers generally do with regard to fundamental facts or axioms, he had accepted them without examination. By means of these simple postulates he had led a tranquil life, untroubled by doubts, until the year 1861, when the so-called freedom was brought to Ivánovka. He himself had not gone to the church to hear Bátushka read the Tsar's manifesto, but his master, on returning from the ceremony, had called him and said, "Anton, you are free now, but the Tsar says you are to serve as you have done for two years longer."

To this startling announcement Anton had replied coolly, "Slushayus," or, as we should say, "Yes, sir," and without further comment had gone to fetch his master's breakfast; but what he saw and heard during the next few weeks greatly troubled his old conceptions of human society and the fitness of things. From that time must be dated, I suppose, the expression of mental confusion which his face habitually wore.

The first thing that roused his indignation was the conduct of his fellow-servants. Nearly all the unmarried ones seemed to be suddenly attacked by a peculiar matrimonial mania. The reason of this was that the new law expressly gave permission to the emancipated serfs to marry as they chose, without the consent of their masters, and nearly all the unmarried adults hastened to take advantage of their newly acquired privilege, though many of them had great difficulty in raising the capital necessary to pay the priest's fees. Then came disorders among the peasantry, the death of the old master, and the removal of the family, first to St. Petersburg, and afterwards to Germany. Anton's mind had never been of a very powerful order, and these great

events had exercised a deleterious influence upon it. When Karl Karl'itch, at the expiry of the two years, informed him that he might now go where he chose, he replied, with a look of blank, unfeigned astonishment, "Where can I go to?" He had never conceived the possibility of being forced to earn his bread in some new way, and begged Karl Karl'itch to let him remain where he was. This request was readily granted, for Anton was an honest, faithful servant, and sincerely attached to the family, and it was accordingly arranged that he should receive a small monthly salary and occupy an intermediate position between those of major-domo and head watch-dog.

Had Anton been transformed into a real watch-dog he could scarcely have slept more than he did. His power of sleeping, and his somnolence when he imagined he was awake, were his two most prominent characteristics. Out of consideration for his years and his love of repose, I troubled him as little as possible; but even the small amount of service which I demanded he contrived to curtail in an ingenious way. The time and exertion required for traversing the intervening space between his own room and mine might, he thought, be more profitably employed; and accordingly he extemporised a bed in a small ante-chamber, close to my door, and took up there his permanent abode. If sonorous snoring be sufficient proof that the performer is asleep, then I must conclude that Anton devoted about three-fourths of his time to sleeping and a large part of the remaining fourth to yawning and elongated guttural ejaculations. At first this little arrangement considerably annoyed me, but I bore it patiently, and afterwards received my reward, for during my illness I found it very convenient to have an attendant within call. And I must do Anton the justice to say that he served me well in his own somnolent fashion. He seemed to have the faculty of hearing when asleep, and generally appeared in my room before he had succeeded in getting his eyes completely open.

Anton had never found time, during his long life, to form many opinions, but he had somehow imbibed or inhaled a few convictions, all of a decidedly conservative kind, and one of these was that *feldshers* were useless and dangerous

members of society. Again and again he had advised me to have nothing to do with the one who visited me, and more than once he recommended to me an old woman of the name of Masha, who lived in a village a few miles off. Masha was what is known in Russia as a *znakharka*—that is to say, a woman who is half witch, half medical practitioner—the whole permeated with a strong leaven of knavery. According to Anton, she could effect by means of herbs and charms every possible cure short of raising the dead, and even with regard to this last operation he cautiously refrained from expressing an opinion.

The idea of being subjected to a course of herbs and charms by an old woman, who probably knew very little about the hidden properties of either, did not seem to me inviting, and more than once I flatly refused to have recourse to such unhallowed means. On due consideration, however, I thought that a professional interview with the old witch would be rather amusing, and then a brilliant idea occurred to me! I should bring together the *feldsher* and the *znakharka*, who no doubt hated each other with a Kilkenny-cat hatred, and let them fight out their differences before me for the benefit of science and my own delectation.

The more I thought of my project, the more I congratulated myself on having conceived such a scheme; but, alas! in this very imperfectly organised world of ours brilliant ideas are seldom realised, and in this case I was destined to be disappointed. Did the old woman's black art warn her of approaching danger, or was she simply actuated by a feeling of professional jealousy and considerations of professional etiquette? To this question I can give no positive answer, but certain it is that she could not be induced to pay me a visit, and I was thus balked of my expected amusement. I succeeded, however, in learning indirectly something about the old witch. She enjoyed among her neighbours that solid, durable kind of respect which is founded on vague, undefinable fear, and was believed to have effected many remarkable cures. In the treatment of syphilitic diseases, which are fearfully common among the Russian peasantry, she was supposed to be specially successful, and I have no doubt, from the vague

descriptions which I received, that the charm which she employed in these cases was of a mercurial kind. Some time afterwards I saw one of her victims. Whether she had succeeded in destroying the poison I know not, but she had at least succeeded in destroying most completely the patient's teeth. How women of this kind obtain mercury, and how they have discovered its medicinal properties, I cannot explain. Neither can I explain how they have come to know the peculiar properties of ergot of rye, which they frequently employ for illicit purposes familiar to all students of medical jurisprudence.

The *znakharka* and the *feldsher* represent two very different periods in the history of medical science—the magical and the semi-scientific. The Russian peasantry have still many conceptions which belong to the former. The great majority of them are already quite willing, under ordinary circumstances, to use the scientific means of healing; but as soon as a violent epidemic breaks out, and the scientific means prove unequal to the occasion, the old faith revives, and recourse is had to magical rites and incantations. Of these rites many are very curious. Here, for instance, is one which had been performed in a village near which I afterwards lived for some time. Cholera had been raging in the district for several weeks. In the village in question no case had yet occurred, but the inhabitants feared that the dreaded visitor would soon arrive, and the following ingenious contrivance was adopted for warding off the danger. At midnight, when the male population was supposed to be asleep, all the maidens met in nocturnal costume, according to a preconcerted plan, and formed a procession. In front marched a girl, holding an Icon. Behind her came her companions, dragging a *sokhá*—the primitive plough commonly used by the peasantry—by means of a long rope. In this order the procession made the circuit of the entire village, and it was confidently believed that the cholera would not be able to overstep the magical circle thus described. Many of the males probably knew, or at least suspected, what was going on; but they prudently remained within doors, knowing well that if they should be caught peeping indiscreetly at the mystic ceremony, they

would be unmercifully beaten by those who were taking part in it.

This custom is doubtless a survival of old pagan superstitions. The introduction of the Icon is a modern innovation, which illustrates that curious blending of paganism and Christianity which is often to be met with in Russia, and of which I shall have more to say in another chapter.

Sometimes, when an epidemic breaks out, the panic produced takes a more dangerous form. The people suspect that it is the work of the doctors, or that some ill-disposed persons have poisoned the wells, and no amount of reasoning will convince them that their own habitual disregard of the most simple sanitary precautions has something to do with the phenomenon. I know of one case where an itinerant photographer was severely maltreated in consequence of such suspicions; and once, in St. Petersburg, during the reign of Nicholas I., a serious riot took place. The excited populace had already thrown several doctors out of the windows of the hospital, when the Emperor arrived, unattended, in an open carriage, and quelled the disturbance by his simple presence, aided by his stentorian voice.

Of the ignorant credulity of the Russian peasantry I might relate many curious illustrations. The most absurd rumours sometimes awaken consternation throughout a whole district. One of the most common reports of this kind used to be that a female conscription was about to take place. At the time of the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage with the daughter of Alexander II. this report was specially frequent. A large number of young girls were to be kidnapped and sent to England in a red ship. Why the ship was to be red I can easily explain, because in the peasants' language the conceptions of red and beautiful are expressed by the same word (*krasny*), and in the popular legends the epithet is indiscriminately applied to everything connected with princes and great personages; but what was to be done with the kidnapped maidens when they arrived at their destination, I never succeeded in discovering.

The most amusing instance of credulity which I can recall was the following, related to me by a peasant woman who came from the village where the incident had occurred.

One day in winter, about the time of sunset, a peasant family was startled by the entrance of a strange visitor: a female figure dressed as St. Barbara is commonly represented in the religious pictures. All present were very much astonished by this apparition; but the figure told them, in a low, soft voice, to be of good cheer, for she was St. Barbara, and had come to honour the family with a visit as a reward for their piety. The peasant thus favoured was not remarkable for his piety, but he did not consider it necessary to correct the mistake of his saintly visitor, and requested her to be seated. With perfect readiness she accepted the invitation, and began at once to discourse in an edifying way.

Meanwhile the news of this wonderful apparition spread like wildfire, and all the inhabitants of the village, as well as those of a neighbouring village about a mile distant, collected in and around the house. Whether the priest was among those who came my informant did not know. Many of those who had come could not get within hearing, but those at the outskirts of the crowd hoped that the saint might come out before disappearing. Their hopes were gratified. About midnight the mysterious visitor announced that she would go and bring St. Nicholas, the miracle worker, and requested all to remain perfectly still during her absence. The crowd respectfully made way for her, and she passed out into the darkness. With breathless expectation all awaited the arrival of St. Nicholas, who is the favourite saint of the Russian peasantry; but hours passed, and he did not appear. At last, towards sunrise, some of the less zealous spectators began to return home, and those of them who had come from the neighbouring village discovered to their horror that during their absence their horses had been stolen! At once they raised the hue-and-cry; and the peasants scoured the country in all directions in search of the *soi-disant* St. Barbara and her accomplices, but they never recovered the stolen property. "And serve them right, the blockheads!" added my informant, who had herself escaped falling into the trap by being absent from the village at the time.

It is but fair to add that the ordinary Russian peasant,

though in some respects extremely credulous, and, like all other people, subject to occasional panics, is by no means easily frightened by real dangers. Those who have seen them under fire will readily credit this statement. For my own part, I have had opportunities of observing them merely in dangers of a non-military kind, and have often admired the perfect coolness displayed. Even an epidemic alarms them only when it attains a certain degree of intensity. Once I had a good opportunity of observing this on board a large steamer on the Volga. It was a very hot day in the early autumn. As it was well known that there was a great deal of Asiatic cholera all over the country, prudent people refrained from eating much raw fruit; but Russian peasants are not generally prudent men, and I noticed that those on board were consuming enormous quantities of raw cucumbers and water-melons. This imprudence was soon followed by its natural punishment. I refrain from describing the scene that ensued, but I may say that those who were attacked received from the others every possible assistance. Had no unforeseen accident happened, we should have arrived at Kazan on the following morning, and been able to send the patients to the hospital of that town; but as there was little water in the river, we had to cast anchor for the night, and next morning we ran aground and stuck fast. Here we had to remain patiently till a smaller steamer hove in sight. All this time there was not the slightest symptom of panic, and when the small steamer came alongside there was no frantic rush to get away from the infected vessel, though it was quite evident that only a few of the passengers could be taken off. Those who were nearest the gangway went quietly on board the small steamer, and those who were less fortunate remained patiently till another steamer happened to pass.

The old conceptions of disease, as something that may be most successfully cured by charms and similar means, are rapidly disappearing. The Zemstvo—that is to say, the new local self-government—has done much towards this end by enabling the people to procure better medical attendance. In the towns there are public hospitals, which generally are —or at least seem to an unprofessional eye—in a very satis-

factory condition. The resident doctors are daily besieged by a crowd of peasants, who come from far and near to ask advice and receive medicines. Besides this, in some provinces, *feldshers* are placed in the principal villages, and the doctor makes frequent tours of inspection. The doctors are generally well-educated men, and do a large amount of work for a very small remuneration.

Of the lunatic asylums, which are generally attached to the larger hospitals, I cannot speak very favourably. Some of the great central ones are all that could be desired, but others are badly constructed and fearfully overcrowded. One or two of those I visited appeared to me to be conducted on very patriarchal principles, as the following incident may illustrate.

I had been visiting a large hospital, and had remained there so long that it was already dark before I reached the adjacent lunatic asylum. Seeing no lights in the windows, I proposed to my companion, who was one of the inspectors, that we should delay our visit till the following morning, but he assured me that by the regulations the lights ought not to be extinguished till considerably later, and consequently there was no objection to our going in at once. If there was no legal objection, there was at least a physical obstruction in the form of a large wooden door, and all our efforts to attract the attention of the porter or some other inmate were unavailing. At last, after much ringing, knocking, and shouting, a voice from within asked us who we were and what we wanted. A brief reply from my companion, not couched in the most polite or amiable terms, made the bolts rattle and the door open with surprising rapidity, and we saw before us an old man with long, dishevelled hair, who, as far as appearance went, might have been one of the lunatics, bowing obsequiously and muttering apologies.

After groping our way along a dark corridor we entered a still darker room, and the door was closed and locked behind us. As the key turned in the rusty lock a wild scream rang through the darkness! Then came a yell, then a howl, and then various sounds which the poverty of the English language prevents me from designating—the whole

blending into a hideous discord that would have been at home in some of the worst regions of Dante's Inferno. As to the cause of it I could not even form a conjecture. Gradually my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, and I could dimly perceive white figures flitting about the room. At the same time I felt something standing near me, and close to my shoulder I saw a pair of eyes and long streaming hair. On my other side, equally close, was something very like a woman's night-cap. Though by no means of a nervous temperament, I felt uncomfortable. To be shut up in a dark room with an indefinite number of excited maniacs is not a comfortable position. How long the imprisonment lasted I know not—probably not more than two or three minutes, but it seemed a long time. At last a light was procured, and the whole affair was explained. The guardians, not expecting the visit of an inspector at so late an hour, had retired for the night much earlier than usual, and the old porter had put us into the nearest ward until he could fetch a light—locking the door behind us lest any of the lunatics should escape. The noise had awakened one of the unfortunate inmates of the ward, and her hysterical scream had terrified the others.

By the influence of asylums, hospitals, and similar institutions, the old conceptions of disease, as I have said, are gradually dying out, but the *znakharka* still finds practice. The fact that the *znakharka* is to be found side by side not only with the *feldsher*, but also with the highly trained bacteriologist, is very characteristic of Russian civilisation, which is a strange conglomeration of products belonging to very different periods. The inquirer who undertakes the study of it will sometimes be scarcely less surprised than would be the naturalist who should unexpectedly stumble upon antediluvian megatheria grazing tranquilly in the same field with prize Southdowns. He will discover the most primitive institutions side by side with the latest products of French doctrinairism, and the most childish superstitions in close proximity with the most advanced free-thinking.

CHAPTER VI

A PEASANT FAMILY OF THE OLD TYPE

My illness had at least one good result. It brought me into contact with the *feldsher*, and through him, after my recovery, I made some new acquaintances. Of these by far the most interesting was an old man called Ivan Petrov.

Ivan must have been about sixty years of age, but was still robust and strong, and had the reputation of being able to mow more hay in a given time than any other peasant in the village. His head would have made a fine study for a portrait-painter. Like Russian peasants in general, he wore his hair parted in the middle—a custom which perhaps owes its origin to the religious pictures. The reverend appearance given to his face by his long fair beard, slightly tinged with grey, was in part counteracted by his eyes, which had a strange twinkle in them—whether of humour or of roguery, it was difficult to say. Under all circumstances—whether in his light, nondescript summer costume, or in his warm sheep-skin, or in the long, glossy, dark-blue, double-breasted coat which he put on occasionally on Sundays and holidays—he always looked a well-fed, respectable, prosperous member of society; whilst his imperturbable composure, and the entire absence of obsequiousness or truculence in his manner, indicated plainly that he possessed no small amount of calm, deep-rooted self-respect. A stranger, on seeing him, might readily have leaped to the conclusion that he must be the Village Elder, but in reality he was a simple member of the Commune, like his neighbour, poor Zakhar Leshkov, who never let slip an opportunity of getting drunk, was always in debt, and, on the whole, possessed a more than dubious reputation.

Ivan had, it is true, been Village Elder some years before. When elected by the Village Assembly, against his own wishes, he had said quietly, "Very well, children;

I will serve my three years"; and at the end of that period, when the Assembly wished to re-elect him, he had answered firmly, "No, children; I have served my term. It is now the turn of someone who is younger, and has more time. There's Peter Alekseyev, a good fellow, and an honest: you may choose him." And the Assembly chose the peasant indicated; for Ivan, though a simple member of the Commune, had more influence in Communal affairs than any other half-dozen members put together. No grave matter was decided without his being consulted, and there was at least one instance on record of the Village Assembly postponing deliberations for a week because he happened to be absent in St. Petersburg.

No stranger casually meeting Ivan would ever for a moment have suspected that that big man, of calm, commanding aspect, had been during a great part of his life a serf. And yet a serf he had been from his birth till he was about thirty years of age—not merely a serf of the State, but the serf of a proprietor who had lived habitually on his property. For thirty years of his life he had been dependent on the arbitrary will of a master who had the legal power to have him flogged as often and as severely as he considered desirable. In reality he had never been subjected to corporal punishment, for the proprietor to whom he had belonged had been, though in some respects severe, a just and intelligent master.

Ivan's bright, sympathetic face had early attracted the master's attention, and it was decided that he should learn a trade. For this purpose he was sent to Moscow, and apprenticed there to a carpenter. After four years of apprenticeship he was able not only to earn his own bread, but to help the household in the payment of their taxes, and to pay annually to his master a fixed yearly sum—first ten, then twenty, then thirty, and ultimately, for some years immediately before the Emancipation, seventy roubles. In return for this annual sum he was free to work and wander about as he pleased, and for some years he had made ample use of his conditional liberty. I never succeeded in extracting from him a chronological account of his travels, but I could gather from his occasional remarks that he had wandered

over a great part of European Russia. Evidently he had been in his youth what is colloquially termed "a roving blade," and had by no means confined himself to the trade which he had learned during his four years of apprenticeship. Once he had helped to navigate a raft from Vetluga to Astrakhan, a distance of about two thousand miles. At another time he had been at Archangel and Onega, on the shores of the White Sea. St. Petersburg and Moscow were both well known to him, and he had visited Odessa.

The precise nature of Ivan's occupations during these wanderings I could not ascertain; for, with all his openness of manner, he was extremely reticent regarding his commercial affairs. To all my inquiries on this topic he was wont to reply vaguely, "Lesnóe dyelo"—that is to say, "Timber business"; and from this I concluded that his chief occupation had been that of a timber merchant. Indeed, when I knew him, though he was no longer a regular trader, he was always ready to buy any bit of forest that could be bought in the vicinity for a reasonable price.

During all this nomadic period of his life Ivan had never entirely severed his connection with his native village or with agricultural life. When about the age of twenty he had spent several months at home, taking part in the field labour, and had married a wife—a strong, healthy young woman, who had been selected for him by his mother, and strongly recommended to him on account of her good character and her physical strength. In the opinion of Ivan's mother, beauty was a kind of luxury which only nobles and rich merchants could afford, and ordinary comeliness was a very secondary consideration—so secondary as to be left almost entirely out of sight. This was likewise the opinion of Ivan's wife. She had never been comely herself, she used to say, but she had been a good wife to her husband. He had never complained about her want of good looks, and had never gone after those who were considered good-looking. In expressing this opinion she always first bent forward, then drew herself up to her full height, and finally gave a little jerky nod sideways, so as to clench the statement. Then Ivan's bright eye would twinkle more brightly than usual, and he would ask her how she knew

that—reminding her that he was not always at home. This was Ivan's stereotyped mode of teasing his wife, and every time he employed it he was called an "old scarecrow," or something of the kind.

Perhaps, however, Ivan's jocular remark had more significance in it than his wife cared to admit, for during the first years of their married life they had seen very little of each other. A few days after the marriage, when according to our notions the honeymoon should be at its height, Ivan had gone to Moscow for several months, leaving his young bride to the care of his father and mother. The young bride did not consider this an extraordinary hardship, for many of her companions had been treated in the same way, and according to public opinion in that part of the country there was nothing abnormal in the proceeding. Indeed, it may be said in general that there is very little romance or sentimentality about Russian peasant marriages. In this as in other respects the Russian peasantry are, as a class, extremely practical and matter-of-fact in their conceptions and habits, and are not at all prone to indulge in sublime, ethereal sentiments of any kind. They have little or nothing of what may be termed the Hermann and Dorothea element in their composition, and consequently know very little about those sentimental, romantic ideas which we habitually associate with the preliminary steps to matrimony. Even those authors who endeavour to idealise peasant life have rarely ventured to make their story turn on a sentimental love affair. Certainly in real life the wife is taken as a helpmate, or in plain language a worker, rather than as a companion, and the mother-in-law leaves her very little time to indulge in fruitless dreaming.

As time wore on, and his father became older and frailer, Ivan's visits to his native place became longer and more frequent, and when the old man was at last incapable of work, Ivan settled down permanently and undertook the direction of the household. In the meantime his own children had been growing up. When I knew the family it comprised—besides two daughters who had married early and gone to live with their parents-in-law—Ivan and his wife, two sons, three daughters-in-law, and an indefinite and

frequently varying number of grandchildren. The fact that there were three daughters-in-law and only two sons was the result of the Conscription, which had taken away the youngest son shortly after his marriage. The two who remained spent only a small part of the year at home. The one was a carpenter and the other a bricklayer, and both wandered about the country in search of employment, as their father had done in his younger days. There was, however, one difference. The father had always shown a leaning towards commercial transactions, rather than the simple practice of his handicraft, and consequently he had usually lived and travelled alone. The sons, on the contrary, confined themselves to their handicrafts, and were always during the working season members of an *artél*.

The *artél* in its various forms is a curious institution. Those to which Ivan's sons belonged were simply temporary, itinerant associations of workmen, who during the summer lived together, fed together, worked together, and periodically divided amongst themselves the profits. This is the primitive form of the institution, and is now not very often met with. Here, as elsewhere, capital has made itself felt and destroyed that equality which exists among the members of an *artél* in the above sense of the word. Instead of forming themselves into a temporary association, the workmen now generally make an arrangement with a contractor who has a little capital, and receive from him fixed monthly wages. The only association which exists in this case is for the purchase and preparation of provisions, and even these duties are very often left to the contractor.

In some of the larger towns there are *artéls* of a much more complex kind—permanent associations, possessing a large capital, and pecuniarily responsible for the acts of the individual members. Of these, by far the most celebrated is that of the Bank Porters. These men have unlimited opportunities of stealing, and are often entrusted with the guarding or transporting of enormous sums; but the banker has no cause for anxiety, because he knows that if any defalcations occur they will be made good to him by the *artél*. Such accidents very rarely happen, and the fact is by no means so extraordinary as many people suppose. The *artél*, being

responsible for the individuals of which it is composed, is very careful in admitting new members, and a man when admitted is closely watched, not only by the regularly constituted office-bearers, but also by all his fellow-members who have an opportunity of observing him. If he begins to spend money too freely or to neglect his duties, though his employer may know nothing of the fact, suspicions are at once aroused among his fellow-members, and an investigation ensues—ending in summary expulsion if the suspicions prove to have been well founded. Mutual responsibility, in short, creates a very efficient system of mutual supervision.

Of Ivan's sons, the one who was a carpenter visited his family only occasionally, and at irregular intervals; the bricklayer, on the contrary, as building is impossible in Russia during the cold weather, spent the greater part of the winter at home. Both of them paid a large part of their earnings into the family treasury, over which their father exercised uncontrolled authority. If he wished to make any considerable outlay, he consulted his sons on the subject; but, as he was a prudent, intelligent man, and enjoyed the respect and confidence of the family, he never met with any strong opposition. All the field work was performed by him with the assistance of his daughters-in-law; only at harvest time he hired one or two labourers to help him.

Ivan's household was a good specimen of the Russian peasant family of the old type. Previous to the Emancipation in 1861 there were many households of this kind, containing the representatives of three generations. All the members, young and old, lived together in patriarchal fashion under the direction and authority of the Head of the House, called usually the *Khozaïn*—that is to say, the Administrator; or, in some districts, the *Bolshák*, which means literally "the Big One." Generally speaking, this important position was occupied by the grandfather, or, if he was dead, by the eldest brother, but the rule was not very strictly observed. If, for instance, the grandfather became infirm, or if the eldest brother was incapacitated by disorderly habits or other cause, the place of authority was taken by some other member—it might be by a woman—

who was a good manager and possessed the greatest moral influence.

The relations between the Head of the Household and the other members depended on custom and personal character, and they consequently varied greatly in different families. If the Big One was an intelligent man, of decided, energetic character, like my friend Ivan, there was probably perfect discipline in the household, except perhaps in the matter of female tongues, which do not readily submit to the authority even of their owners; but very often it happened that the Big One was not thoroughly well fitted for his post, and in that case endless quarrels and bickerings inevitably took place. Those quarrels were generally caused and fomented by the female members of the family—a fact which will not seem strange if we try to realise how difficult it must be for several sisters-in-law to live together, with their children and a mother-in-law, within the narrow limits of a peasant's household. The complaints of the young bride, who finds that her mother-in-law puts all the hard work on her shoulders, form a favourite theme in the popular poetry.

The house, with its appurtenances, the cattle, the agricultural implements, the grain and other products, the money gained from the sale of these products—in a word, the house and nearly everything it contained—were the joint property of the family. Hence, nothing was bought or sold by any member—not even by the Big One himself, unless he possessed an unusual amount of authority—without the express or tacit consent of the other grown-up males, and all the money that was earned was put into the common purse. When one of the sons left home to work elsewhere, he was expected to bring or send home all his earnings, except what he required for food, lodgings, and other *necessary* expenses; and if he understood the word "necessary" in too lax a sense, he had to listen to very plain-spoken reproaches when he returned. During his absence, which might last for a whole year or several years, his wife and children remained in the house as before, and the money which he earned could be devoted to the payment of the family taxes.

The peasant household of the old type was thus a primitive labour association, of which the members had all things in common, and it is not a little remarkable that the peasant conceived it as such rather than as a family. This was shown by the customary terminology, for the Head of the Household was not called by any word corresponding to Paterfamilias, but was termed, as he is still, *Khozaïn*, or Administrator—a word that is applied equally to a farmer, a shopkeeper, or the head of an industrial undertaking, and does not at all convey the idea of blood-relationship. It was likewise shown by what took place when a household was broken up. On such occasions the degree of blood-relationship was not taken into consideration in the distribution of the property. All the adult male members shared equally. Illegitimate and adopted sons, if they had contributed their share of labour, had the same rights as the sons born in lawful wedlock. The married daughter, on the contrary—being regarded as belonging to her husband's family—and the son who had previously separated himself from the household were excluded from the succession. Strictly speaking, the succession or inheritance was confined to the wearing apparel and any little personal effects of a deceased member. The house and all that it contained belonged to the little household community; and, consequently, when it was broken up, by the death of the *Khozaïn* or other cause, the members did not inherit, but merely appropriated individually what they had hitherto possessed collectively. Thus there was properly no inheritance or succession, but simply liquidation and distribution of the property among the members. The written law of inheritance, founded on the conception of personal property, was quite unknown to the peasantry, and quite inapplicable to their mode of life. Thus a large and most important section of the Code remained a dead letter for about four-fifths of the population.

This predominance of practical economic considerations was exemplified also by the way in which marriages were arranged in these large families. In the primitive system of agriculture usually practised in Russia, the natural labour-unit—if I may use such a term—comprised a man, a woman, and a horse. As soon, therefore, as a boy became an able-

bodied labourer he had to be provided with the two accessories necessary for the completion of the labour-unit. To procure a horse, either by purchase or by rearing a foal, was the duty of the Head of the House; to procure a wife for the youth was the duty of "the female Big One" (*Bolshúkha*). And the chief consideration in determining the choice was in both cases the same. Prudent domestic administrators were not to be tempted by showy horses or beautiful brides; what they sought was not beauty, but physical strength and capacity for work. When the youth reached the age of eighteen he was informed that he ought to marry at once, and as soon as he gave his consent negotiations were opened with the parents of some eligible young person. In the larger villages the negotiations were sometimes facilitated by certain old women called *svakhi*, who occupied themselves specially with this kind of mediation; but very often the affair was arranged directly by, or through the agency of, some common friend of the two houses.

Care had, of course, to be taken that there was no legal obstacle, and these obstacles were not always easily avoided in a small village, the inhabitants of which had been long in the habit of intermarrying. According to Russian ecclesiastical law, not only is marriage between first cousins illegal, but affinity is considered as equivalent to consanguinity—that is to say, a mother-in-law and a sister-in-law are regarded as a mother and a sister—and even the fictitious relationship created by standing together at the baptismal font as godfather and godmother is legally recognised, and may constitute a bar to matrimony. If all the preliminary negotiations were successful, the marriage took place, and the bridegroom brought his bride home to the house of which he was a member. She brought nothing with her as a dowry except her trousseau, but she brought a pair of good strong arms, and thereby enriched her adopted family. Of course it happened occasionally—for human nature is everywhere essentially the same—that a young peasant fell in love with one of his former playmates, and brought his little romance to a happy conclusion at the altar; but such cases were very rare, and as a rule it may be said that the marriages of the Russian peasantry were arranged

under the influence of economic rather than sentimental considerations.

The custom of living in large families has many economic advantages. We all know the edifying fable of the dying man who showed to his sons by means of a piece of wicker-work the advantages of living together and assisting each other. In ordinary times the necessary expenses of a large household of ten members are considerably less than the combined expenses of two households comprising five members each, and when a "black day" comes a large family can bear temporary adversity much more successfully than a small one. These are principles of world-wide application, but in the life of the Russian peasantry they have a peculiar force. Each adult peasant possesses, as I shall hereafter explain, a share of the Communal land, but this share is not sufficient to occupy all his time and working power. One married pair can easily cultivate two shares —at least in all provinces where the peasant allotments are not very large. Now, if a family is composed of two married couples, one of the men can go elsewhere and earn money, whilst the other, with his wife and sister-in-law, can cultivate the two combined shares of land. If, on the contrary, a family consists merely of one pair with young children, the man must either remain at home—in which case he may have difficulty in finding work for the whole of his time—or he must leave home, and entrust the cultivation of his share of the land to his wife, whose time must be in great part devoted to domestic affairs.

In the time of serfage the proprietors clearly perceived these and similar advantages, and compelled their serfs to live together in large families. No family could be broken up without the proprietor's consent, and this consent was not easily obtained unless the family had assumed quite abnormal proportions and was permanently disturbed by domestic dissension. In the matrimonial affairs of the serfs, too, the majority of the proprietors systematically exercised a certain supervision, not necessarily from any paltry meddling spirit, but because their own material interests were thereby affected. A proprietor would not, for instance, allow the daughter of one of his serfs to marry a serf belong-

ing to another proprietor—because he would thereby lose a female labourer—unless some compensation were offered. The compensation might be a sum of money, or the affair might be arranged on the principle of reciprocity by the master of the bridegroom allowing one of his female serfs to marry a serf belonging to the master of the bride.

However advantageous the custom of living in large families may appear when regarded from the economic point of view, it has very serious defects, both theoretical and practical.

That families connected by the ties of blood-relationship and marriage can easily live together in harmony is one of those social axioms which are accepted universally and believed by nobody. We all know by our own experience, or by that of others, that the friendly relations of two such families are greatly endangered by proximity of habitation. To live in the same street is not advisable; to occupy adjoining houses is positively dangerous; and to live under the same roof is certainly fatal to prolonged amity. There may be the very best intentions on both sides, and the arrangement may be inaugurated by the most gushing expressions of undying affection and by the discovery of innumerable secret affinities, but neither affinities, affection, nor good intentions can withstand the constant friction and occasional jerks which inevitably ensue.

Now the reader must endeavour to realise that Russian peasants, even when clad in sheep-skins, are human beings like ourselves. Though they are often represented as abstract entities—as figures in a table of statistics or dots on a diagram—they have in reality "organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions." If not exactly "fed with the same food," they are at least "hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means," and liable to be irritated by the same annoyances, as we are. And those of them who live in large families are subjected to a kind of probation that most of us have never dreamed of. The families comprising a large household not only live together, but have nearly all things in common. Each member works, not for himself, but for the household, and all that he earns is expected to go into the family

treasury. The arrangement almost inevitably leads to one of two results—either there are continual dissensions, or order is preserved by a powerful domestic tyranny.

It was quite natural, therefore, that when the authority of the landed proprietors was abolished by the Emancipation Edict of 1861, the large peasant families almost all crumbled to pieces. The arbitrary rule of the *Khozaïn* was based on, and maintained by, the arbitrary rule of the proprietor, and both naturally fell together. In 1870, when I spent the autumn at Ivánovka, large households like that of our friend Ivan were preserved only in exceptional cases, where the Head of the House happened to possess an unusual amount of moral influence over the other members; and since that time they have been rapidly disappearing.

This change has unquestionably had a prejudicial influence on the material welfare of the peasantry, but it must have added considerably to their domestic comfort, and may perhaps produce good moral results. For the present, however, the evil consequences are by far the most prominent. Every married peasant strives to have a house of his own, and many of them, in order to defray the necessary expenses, have recourse to the moneylenders. This is a very serious matter. Even if the peasants could obtain money at five or six per cent., the position of the debtors would be bad enough, but it is in reality much worse, for the village usurers consider twenty or twenty-five per cent. a by no means exorbitant rate of interest. A laudable attempt has been made to remedy this state of things by village banks, but these have proved successful only in certain exceptional localities. As a rule the peasant who contracts debts has a hard struggle to pay the interest in ordinary times, and when some misfortune overtakes him—when, for instance, the harvest is bad or his horse is stolen—he probably falls hopelessly into pecuniary embarrassments. I have seen peasants not specially addicted to drunkenness or other ruinous habits sink to a helpless state of insolvency. Fortunately for such insolvent debtors, they are treated by the law with extreme leniency. Their house, their share of the common land, their agricultural implements, their horse—in a word, all that is necessary for their subsistence, is exempt from sequestration.

The Commune, however, may bring strong pressure to bear on those who do not pay their taxes. When I lived among the peasantry in the 'seventies, corporal punishment, inflicted by order of the Commune, was among the means usually employed; and though the custom has been prohibited by an Imperial decree of Nicholas II., I am not at all sure that it has entirely disappeared in real life. Traditional usage in Russia sometimes resists successfully even the Imperial power.

CHAPTER VII

THE PEASANTRY OF THE NORTH

IVÁNOVKA may be taken as a fair specimen of the villages in the northern half of the country, and a brief description of its inhabitants will convey a tolerably correct notion of the northern peasantry in general.

Nearly the whole of the female population, and about one-half of the male inhabitants, are habitually engaged in cultivating the Communal land, which comprises about two thousand acres of a light sandy soil. The arable part of this land is divided into three large fields, each of which is cut up into long narrow strips. The first field is reserved for the winter grain—that is to say, rye, which forms, in the shape of black bread, the principal food of the rural population. In the second are raised oats for the horses, and buckwheat, which is largely used for food. The third lies fallow, and is used in the summer as pasturage for the cattle.

All the villagers in this part of the country divide the arable land in this way, in order to suit the triennial rotation of crops. This triennial system is extremely simple. The field which is used this year for raising winter grain will be used next year for raising summer grain, and in the following year will lie fallow. Before being sown with winter grain it ought to receive a certain amount of manure. Every family possesses in each of the two fields under cultivation one or more of the long narrow strips or belts into which they are divided.

The annual life of the peasantry is that of simple husbandmen, inhabiting a country where the winter is long and severe. The agricultural year begins in April with the melting of the snow. Nature has been lying dormant for some months. Awaking now from her long sleep, and throwing off her white mantle, she strives to make up for lost time. No sooner has the snow disappeared than the

fresh young grass begins to shoot up, and very soon afterwards the shrubs and trees begin to bud. The rapidity of this transition from winter to spring astonishes the inhabitants of more temperate climes.

On St. George's Day (April 23rd*) the cattle are brought out for the first time, and sprinkled with holy water by the priest. They are never very fat, but at this period of the year their appearance is truly lamentable. During the winter they have been cooped up in small unventilated cow-houses, and fed almost exclusively on straw; now, when they are released from their imprisonment, they look like the ghosts of their former emaciated selves. All are lean and weak, many are lame, and some cannot rise to their feet without assistance.

Meanwhile the peasants are impatient to begin the field labour. An old proverb which they all know says: "Sow in mud and you will be a prince"; and they always act in accordance with this dictate of traditional wisdom. As soon as it is possible to plough they begin to prepare the land for the summer grain, and this labour occupies them probably till the end of May. Then comes the work of carting out manure and preparing the fallow field for the winter grain, which will last probably till about St. Peter's Day (June 29th), when the hay-making generally begins. After the hay-making comes the harvest, by far the busiest time of the year. From the middle of July—especially from St. Elijah's Day (July 20th), when the saint is usually heard rumbling along the heavens in his chariot of fire†—until the end of August, the peasant may work day and night, and yet he will find that he has barely time to get all his work done. In little more than a month he has to reap and stack his grain—rye, oats, and whatever else he may have sown either in spring or in the preceding autumn—and to sow the winter grain for next year. To add to his troubles, it sometimes happens that the rye and the oats ripen almost simultaneously, and his position is then still more difficult.

* With regard to Saints' days, I always give the date according to the old style. To find the date according to our calendar, thirteen days must be added.

† It is thus that the peasants explain the thunder, which is often heard at that season.

Whether the seasons favour him or not, the peasant has at this time a hard task, for he can rarely afford to hire the requisite number of labourers, and has generally the assistance merely of his wife and family; but he can at this season work for a short time at high pressure, for he has the prospect of soon obtaining a good rest and an abundance of food. About the end of September the field labour is finished, and on the first day of October the harvest festival begins—a joyous season, during which the parish fêtes are commonly celebrated.

To celebrate a parish fête in true orthodox fashion it is necessary to prepare beforehand a large quantity of *braga*—a kind of home-brewed small beer—and to bake a plentiful supply of *piroghi* or meat pies. Oil, too, has to be procured, and *vodka* (rye spirit) in goodly quantity. At the same time the big room of the *izbá*, as the peasant's house is called, has to be cleared, the floor washed, and the table and benches scrubbed. The evening before the fête, while the *piroghi* are being baked, a little lamp burns before the Icon in the corner of the room, and perhaps one or two guests from a distance arrive in order that they may have on the morrow a full day's enjoyment.

On the morning of the fête the proceedings begin by a long service in the church, at which all the inhabitants are present in their best holiday costumes, except those matrons and young women who remain at home to prepare the dinner. About midday dinner is served in each *izbá* for the family and their friends. In general the Russian peasant's fare is of the simplest kind, and rarely comprises animal food of any sort—not from any vegetarian proclivities, but merely because beef, mutton, and pork are too expensive; but on a holiday, such as a parish fête, there is always on the dinner-table a considerable variety of dishes. In the house of a well-to-do family there will be not only greasy cabbage-soup and *kasha*—a dish made from buckwheat—but also pork, mutton, and perhaps even beef. *Braga* will be supplied in unlimited quantities, and more than once *vodka* will be handed round. When the repast is finished, all rise together, and, turning towards the Icon in the corner, bow and cross themselves repeatedly. The guests then say to their host,

"Spasibo za khleb za sol"—that is to say, "Thanks for your hospitality," or more literally, "Thanks for bread and salt"; and the host replies, "Do not be displeased, sit down once more for good luck"—or perhaps he puts the last part of his request into the form of a rhyming couplet to the following effect: "Sit down, that the hens may brood, and that the chickens and bees may multiply!" All obey this request, and there is another round of *vodka*.

After dinner some stroll about, chatting with their friends, or slumber in some shady nook, whilst those who wish to make merry go to the spot where the young people are singing, playing, dancing, and amusing themselves in various ways. As the sun sinks towards the horizon, the more grave, staid guests wend their way homewards, but many remain for supper and as evening advances the effects of the *vodka* become more and more apparent. Sounds of revelry are heard more frequently from the houses, and a large proportion of the inhabitants and guests appear on the road in various degrees of intoxication. Some of these vow eternal affection to their friends, or with flaccid gestures and in incoherent tones harangue invisible audiences; others stagger about aimlessly in besotted self-contentment, till they drop down in a state of complete unconsciousness. There they will lie tranquilly till they are picked up by their less intoxicated friends, or more probably till they awake of their own accord next morning.

As a whole, a village fête in Russia is a saddening spectacle. It affords a new proof—where, alas! no new proof was required—that we northern nations, who know so well how to work, have not yet learned the art of amusing ourselves.

If the Russian peasant's food were always as good and plentiful as at this season of the year, he would have little reason to complain; but this is by no means the case. Gradually, as the harvest-time recedes, it deteriorates in quality and diminishes in quantity. Besides this, during a great part of the year the peasant is prevented by the rules of the Church from using much that he possesses.

In southern climes, where these rules were elaborated and

first practised, the prescribed fasts are perhaps useful not only in a religious, but also in a sanitary sense. Having abundance of fruit and vegetables, the inhabitants do well to abstain occasionally from animal food. But in countries like Northern and Central Russia the influence of these rules is very different. The Russian peasant cannot get as much animal food as he requires, whilst sour cabbage and cucumbers are probably the only vegetables he can procure, and fruit of any kind is for him an unattainable luxury. Under these circumstances, abstinence from eggs and milk in all their forms during several months of the year seems to the secular mind a superfluous bit of asceticism. If the Church would direct her maternal solicitude to the peasant's drinking, and leave him to eat what he pleases, she might exercise a beneficial influence on his material and moral welfare. Unfortunately she has a great deal too much inherent immobility to attempt anything of the kind, so the *muzhik,* while free to drink copiously whenever he gets the chance, must fast during the seven weeks of Lent, during two or three weeks in June, from the beginning of November till Christmas, and on all Wednesdays and Fridays during the remainder of the year.

From the festival time till the following spring there is no possibility of doing any agricultural work, for the ground is hard as iron, and covered with a deep layer of snow. The male peasants, therefore, who remain in the villages have very little to do, and may spend the greater part of their time in lying idly on the stove, unless they happen to have learned some handicraft that can be practised at home. Formerly, many of them were employed in transporting the grain to the market town, which might be several hundred miles distant; but now this species of occupation has been greatly diminished by the extension of railways.

Another winter occupation which was formerly practised, and has now almost fallen into disuse, was that of stealing wood in the forest. This was, according to peasant morality, no sin, or at most a very venial offence, for God plants and waters the trees, and therefore forests belong properly to no one. So thought the peasantry, but the landed proprietors and the Administration of the Domains held a different

theory of property, and consequently precautions had to be taken to avoid detection. In order to ensure success it was necessary to choose a night when there was a violent snow-storm, which would immediately obliterate all traces of the expedition; and when such a night arrived, the operation was commonly performed with success. During the hours of darkness a tree would be felled, stripped of its branches, dragged into the village, and cut up into firewood, and at sunrise the actors would be tranquilly sleeping on the stove as if they had spent the night at home. In recent years the judicial authorities have done much towards putting down this practice and eradicating the loose conceptions of property with which it was connected.

For the female part of the population the winter used to be a busy time, for it was during these four or five months that the spinning and weaving had to be done, but now the big factories, with their cheap methods of production, are rapidly killing the home industries, and the young girls are not learning to work at the jenny and the loom as their mothers and grandmothers did.

In many of the northern villages, where ancient usages happen to be preserved, the tedium of the long winter evenings is relieved by so-called *Besêdy*, a word which signifies literally conversazioni. A *Besêda*, however, is not exactly a conversazione as we understand the term, but resembles rather what is by some ladies called a Dorcas meeting, with this essential difference, that those present work for themselves and not for any benevolent purpose. In old-fashioned villages as many as three *Besêdy* may assemble about sunset: one for the children, the second for the young people, and the third for the matrons. Each of the three has its peculiar character. In the first, the children work and amuse themselves under the superintendence of an old woman, who trims the torch* and endeavours to keep order. The little girls spin flax in a primitive way without the aid of a jenny, and the boys, who are, on the whole, much less industrious, make simple bits of wicker-work. Formerly—I mean within my own recollection—many of them used to make rude shoes

* The torch (*lutchina*) has now almost entirely disappeared and been replaced by the petroleum lamp.

of plaited bark called *lapty,* but these are being rapidly supplanted by leather boots. These occupations do not prevent an incessant hum of talk, frequent discordant attempts to sing in chorus, and occasional quarrels requiring the energetic interference of the old woman who controls the proceedings. To amuse her noisy flock she sometimes relates to them, for the hundredth time, one of those wonderful old stories that lose nothing by repetition, and all listen to her attentively, as if they had never heard the story before.

The second *Besêda* is held in another house by the young people of a riper age. Here the workers are naturally more staid, less given to quarrelling, sing more in harmony, and require no one to look after them. Some people, however, might think that a chaperon or inspector of some kind would be by no means out of place, for a good deal of flirtation goes on, and, if village scandal is to be trusted, strict propriety in thought, word, and deed is not always observed. How far these reports are true I cannot pretend to say, for the presence of a stranger always acts on the company like the presence of a severe inspector. In the third *Besêda* there is always at least strict decorum. Here the married women work together and talk about their domestic concerns, enlivening the conversation occasionally by the introduction of little bits of village scandal.

Such is the ordinary life of the peasants who live by agriculture; but many of the villagers live occasionally or permanently in the towns. Probably the majority of the peasants in this region have at some period of their lives gained a living elsewhere. Many of the absentees spend yearly a few months at home, whilst others visit their families only occasionally, and, it may be, at long intervals. In no case, however, do they sever their connection with their native village. Even the peasant who becomes a rich merchant and settles permanently with his family in Moscow or St. Petersburg remains probably a member of the Village Commune, and pays his share of the taxes, though he does not enjoy any of the corresponding privileges. Once I remember asking a rich man of this kind, the proprietor of several large houses in St. Petersburg, why he did not free himself from all connection with his native Commune,

with which he had no longer any interests in common. His answer was, "It is all very well to be free, and I don't want anything from the Commune now; but my old father lives there, my mother is buried there, and I like to go back to the old place sometimes. Besides, I have children, and our affairs are commercial (*nashé dyelo torgovoe*), and therefore risky. Who knows but my children may be very glad some day to have a share of the Communal land?"

In respect to these non-agricultural occupations, each district has its speciality. The province of Yaroslavl, for instance, supplies the large towns with waiters for the *traktirs*, or lower class of restaurants, while the best hotels in St. Petersburg are supplied by the Tartars of Kasmíof, celebrated for their sobriety and honesty. One part of the province of Kostromá has a special reputation for producing carpenters and stove-builders, whilst another part, as I once discovered to my surprise, sends yearly to Siberia—not as convicts, but as free labourers—a large contingent of tailors and workers in felt! On questioning some youngsters who were accompanying as apprentices one of these bands, I was informed by a bright-eyed youth of about sixteen that he had already made the journey twice, and intended to go every winter. "And you always bring home a big pile of money with you?" I inquired. "Nitchevo!" replied the little fellow gaily, with an air of pride and self-confidence; "last year I brought home three roubles!" This answer was, at the moment, not altogether welcome, for I had just been discussing with a Russian fellow-traveller as to whether the peasantry can fairly be called industrious, and the boy's reply enabled my antagonist to score a point against me. "You hear that!" he said triumphantly. "A Russian peasant goes all the way to Siberia and back for three roubles! Could you get an Englishman to work at that rate?" "Perhaps not," I replied evasively, thinking at the same time that if a youth were sent several times from Land's End to John o' Groat's House, and obliged to make the greater part of the journey in carts or on foot, he would probably expect, by way of remuneration for the time and labour expended, rather more than six shillings!

Very often the peasants find industrial occupations with-

out leaving home, for various industries which do not require complicated machinery are practised in the villages by the peasants and their families. Wooden vessels, wrought iron, pottery, leather, rush-matting, and numerous other articles are thus produced in enormous quantities. Occasionally we find not only a whole village, but even a whole district, occupied almost exclusively with some one kind of manual industry. In the province of Vladimir, for example, a large group of villages live by Icon-painting; in one locality near Nizhni-Novgorod, nineteen villages are occupied with the manufacture of axes; round about Pavlovo, in the same province, eighty villages produce almost nothing but cutlery; and in a locality called Uloma, on the borders of Novgorod and Tver, no less than two hundred villages live by nail-making.

These domestic industries have long existed, and were formerly an abundant source of revenue—providing a certain compensation for the poverty of the soil. But at present they are in a very critical position. They belong to the primitive period of economic development, and that period in Russia, as I shall explain in a future chapter, is now rapidly drawing to a close. Formerly the Head of a Household bought the raw material, had it worked up at home, and sold with a reasonable profit the manufactured articles at the bazaars, as the local fairs are called, or perhaps at the great annual *yarmarka** of Nizhni-Novgorod. This primitive system is now rapidly becoming obsolete. Capital and wholesale enterprise have come into the field, and are revolutionising the old methods of production and trade. Already whole groups of industrial villages have fallen under the power of middlemen, who advance money to the working households and fix the price of the products. Attempts are frequently made to break their power by voluntary co-operative associations, organised by the local authorities or benevolent landed proprietors of the neighbourhood—like the benevolent people in England who try to preserve the traditional cottage industries—and some of the associations work very well; but the ultimate success of such "efforts to stem the current of capitalism" is extremely doubtful. At

* This term is a corruption of the German word *Jahrmarkt*.

the same time, the periodical bazaars and *yarmarki*, at which producers and consumers transacted their affairs without mediation, are being replaced by permanent stores and by various classes of tradesmen—wholesale and retail.

To the political economist of the rigidly orthodox school this important change may afford great satisfaction. According to his theories it is a gigantic step in the right direction, and must necessarily redound to the advantage of all parties concerned. The producer now receives a regular supply of raw material, and regularly disposes of the articles manufactured; and the time and trouble which he formerly devoted to wandering about in search of customers he can now employ more profitably in productive work. The creation of a class between the producers and the consumers is an important step towards that division and specialisation of labour which is a necessary condition of industrial and commercial prosperity. The consumer no longer requires to go on a fixed day to some distant point, on the chance of finding there what he requires, but can always buy what he pleases in the permanent stores. Above all, the production is greatly increased in amount, and the price of manufactured goods is proportionally lessened.

All this seems clear enough in theory, and anyone who values intellectual tranquillity will feel disposed to accept this view of the case without questioning its accuracy; but the unfortunate traveller who is obliged to use his eyes as well as his logical faculties may find some little difficulty in making the facts fit into the *a priori* formula. Far be it from me to question the wisdom of political economists, but I cannot refrain from remarking that of the three classes concerned—small producers, middlemen, and consumers—two fail to perceive and appreciate the benefits which have been conferred upon them. The small producers complain that on the new system they work more and gain less; and the consumers complain that the manufactured articles, if cheaper and more showy in appearance, are far inferior in quality. The middlemen, who are accused, rightly or wrongly, of taking for themselves the lion's share of the profits, alone seem satisfied with the new arrangement.

Interesting as this question undoubtedly is, it is not of

permanent importance, because the present state of things is merely transitory. Though the peasants may continue for a time to work at home for the wholesale dealers, they cannot in the long run compete with the big factories and workshops, organised on the European model with steam-power and complicated machinery, which already exist in many provinces. Once a country has begun to move forward on the great highway of economic progress, there is no possibility of stopping half-way.

Here again the orthodox economists find reason for congratulation, because big factories and workshops are the cheapest and most productive form of manufacturing industry; and again, the observant traveller cannot shut his eyes to ugly facts which force themselves on his attention. He notices that this cheapest and most productive form of manufacturing industry does not seem to advance the material and moral welfare of the population. Nowhere is there more disease, drunkenness, demoralisation and misery than in the manufacturing districts.

The reader must not imagine that in making these statements I wish to calumniate the spirit of modern enterprise, or to advocate a return to primitive barbarism. All great changes produce a mixture of good and evil, and at first the evil is pretty sure to come prominently forward. Russia is at this moment in a state of transition, and the new condition of things is not yet properly organised. With improved organisation many of the existing evils will disappear. Already in recent years I have noticed sporadic signs of improvement. When factories were first established no proper arrangements were made for housing and feeding the workmen, and the consequent hardships were specially felt when the factories were founded, as was often the case, in rural districts. Now, the richer and more enterprising manufacturers build large barracks for the workmen and their families, and provide them with common kitchens, wash-houses, steam baths, schools, and similar requisites of civilised life. At the same time the Government appoints inspectors to superintend the sanitary arrangements and see that the health and comfort of the workers are properly attended to.

On the whole, we must assume that the activity of these inspectors tends to improve the condition of the working classes. Certainly in some instances it has that effect. I remember, for example, some thirty-five years ago, visiting a lucifer-match factory in which the hands employed worked habitually in an atmosphere impregnated with the fumes of phosphorus, which produce insidious and very painful diseases. Such a thing is hardly possible nowadays. On the other hand, official inspection, like Factory Acts, everywhere gives rise to a good deal of dissatisfaction, and does not always improve the relations between employers and employed. Some of the Russian inspectors, if I may credit the testimony of employers, are young gentlemen imbued with Socialistic notions, who intentionally stir up discontent or who make mischief from inexperience. An amusing illustration of the current complaints came under my notice when, in 1903, I was visiting a landed proprietor of the southern provinces, who had a large sugar factory on his estate. The inspector objected to the traditional custom of the men sleeping in large dormitories, and insisted on sleeping-cots being constructed for them individually. As soon as the change was made the workmen came to the proprietor to complain, and put their grievance in an interrogative form: "Are we cattle that we should be thus cooped up in stalls?"

To return to the northern agricultural region, the rural population have a peculiar type, which is to be accounted for by the fact that they never experienced to its full extent the demoralising influence of serfage. A large proportion of them were settled on State domains and were governed by a special branch of the Imperial administration, whilst others lived on the estates of rich absentee landlords, who were in the habit of leaving the management of their properties to a steward acting under a code of instructions. In either case, though serfs in the eye of the law, they enjoyed practically a very large amount of liberty. By paying a small sum for a passport, they could leave their villages for an indefinite period, and as long as they sent home regularly the money required for taxes and dues, they were in little danger of being molested. Many of them, though officially inscribed as domiciled in their native Communes, lived per-

manently in the towns, and not a few succeeded in amassing large fortunes. The effect of this comparative freedom is apparent even at the present day. These peasants of the north are more energetic, more intelligent, more independent, and consequently less docile and pliable than those of the fertile central provinces. They have, too, more education. A large proportion of them can read and write, and occasionally one meets among them men who have a keen desire for knowledge. Several times I encountered peasants in this region who had a small collection of books, and twice I found in such collections, much to my astonishment, a Russian translation of Buckle's "History of Civilisation."

How, it may be asked, did a book of this sort find its way to such a place? If the reader will pardon a short digression, I will explain the fact.

Immediately after the Crimean War there was a curious intellectual movement—of which I shall have more to say hereafter—among the Russian educated classes. The movement assumed various forms, of which two of the most prominent were a desire for encyclopædic knowledge, and an attempt to reduce all knowledge to a scientific form. For men in this state of mind, Buckle's great work had naturally a powerful fascination. It seemed at first sight to reduce the multifarious conflicting facts of human history to a few simple principles, and to evolve order out of chaos. Its success, therefore, was great. In the course of a few years no less than four independent translations were published and sold. Everyone read, or at least professed to have read, the wonderful book, and many believed that its author was the greatest genius of his time. During the first year of my residence in Russia (1870) I rarely had a serious conversation without hearing Buckle's name mentioned; and my friends almost always assumed that he had succeeded in creating a genuine science of history on the inductive method. In vain I pointed out that Buckle had merely thrown out some hints in his introductory chapter as to how such a science ought to be constructed, and that he had himself made no serious attempt to use the method which he commended. My objections had little or no effect: the belief was too deep-rooted to be so easily eradicated. In books,

periodicals, newspapers, and professional lectures, the name of Buckle was constantly cited—often violently dragged in without the slightest reason—and the cheap translations of his work were sold in enormous quantities. It is not, then, so very wonderful after all that the book should have found its way to two villages in the province of Yaroslavl.

The enterprising, self-reliant, independent spirit which is often to be found among those peasants manifests itself occasionally in amusing forms among the young generation. Often in this part of the country I have encountered boys who recalled young America rather than young Russia. One of these young hopefuls I remember well. I was waiting at a post-station for the horses to be changed, when he appeared before me in a sheep-skin, fur cap, and gigantic double-soled boots—all of which articles had been made on a scale adapted to future rather than actual requirements. He must have stood in his boots about three feet eight inches, and he could not have been more than twelve years of age; but he had already learned to look upon life as a serious business, wore a commanding air, and knitted his innocent little brows as if the cares of an empire weighed on his diminutive shoulders. Though he was to act as *yamstchik,* he had to leave the putting in of the horses to larger specimens of the human species, but he took care that all was done properly. Putting one of his big boots a little in advance, and drawing himself up to his full shortness, he watched the operation attentively, as if the smallness of his stature had nothing to do with his inactivity. When all was ready, he climbed up to his seat, and at a signal from the station-keeper, who watched with paternal pride all the movements of the little prodigy, we dashed off at a pace rarely attained by post-horses. He had the faculty of emitting a peculiar sound—something between a whir and a whistle—that appeared to have a magical effect on the team, and every few minutes he employed this incentive. The road was rough, and at every jolt he was shot upwards into the air, but he always fell back into his proper position, and never lost for a moment his self-possession or his balance. At the end of the journey I found we had made nearly fourteen miles within the hour.

Unfortunately this energetic, enterprising spirit sometimes takes an illegitimate direction. Not only whole villages, but even whole districts have in this way acquired a bad reputation for robbery, the manufacture of paper-money, and similar offences against the criminal law. In popular parlance, these localities are said to contain "people who play pranks" (*naród shalít*). I must, however, remark that, if I may judge by my own experience, these so-called "playful" tendencies are greatly exaggerated. Though I have travelled many hundreds of miles at night on lonely roads, I was never robbed or in any way molested. Once, indeed, when travelling at night in a *tarantass*, I discovered on awaking that my driver was bending over me, and had introduced his hand into one of my pockets; but the incident ended without serious consequences. When I caught the delinquent hand, and demanded an explanation from the owner, he replied, in an apologetic, caressing tone, that the night was cold, and he wished to warm his fingers; and when I advised him to use for that purpose his own pockets rather than mine, he promised to act in future according to my advice. More than once, it is true, I believed that I was in danger of being attacked, but on every occasion my fears turned out to be unfounded, and sometimes the catastrophe was ludicrous rather than tragical. Let the following serve as an illustration.

I had occasion to traverse, in company with a Russian friend, the country lying to the east of the river Vetluga, in the province of Kostromá—a land of forest and morass, with here and there a patch of cultivation. The majority of the population were Tcheremiss, a Finnish tribe; but near the banks of the river there were villages of Russian peasants, and these latter had the reputation of "playing pranks." When we were on the point of starting from Kozmodemiansk, a town on the bank of the Volga, we received a visit from an officer of rural police, who painted in very sombre colours the habits and moral character—or, more properly, immoral character—of the people whose acquaintance we were about to make. He related with melodramatic gesticulation his encounters with malefactors belonging to the villages through which we had to pass, and ended the

interview with a strong recommendation to us not to travel at night, and to keep at all times our eyes open and our revolvers ready. The effect of his narrative was considerably diminished by the prominence of the moral, which was to the effect that there never had been a police officer who had shown so much zeal, energy, and courage in the discharge of his duty as the worthy man before us. We considered it, however, advisable to remember his hint about keeping our eyes open.

In spite of our intention of being very cautious, it was already dark when we arrived at the village which was to be our halting-place for the night, and it seemed at first as if we should be obliged to spend the night in the open air. The inhabitants had already retired to rest, and refused to open their doors to unknown travellers. At length an old woman, more hospitable than her neighbours, or more anxious to earn an honest penny, consented to let us pass the night in an outer apartment (*seni*), and this permission we gladly accepted. Mindful of the warnings of the police officer, we barricaded the two doors and the window, and the precaution was evidently not superfluous, for almost as soon as the light was extinguished, we could hear that an attempt was being made stealthily to effect an entrance. Notwithstanding my efforts to remain awake and on the watch, I at last fell asleep, and was suddenly aroused by someone grasping me tightly by the arm. Instantly I sprang to my feet and endeavoured to close with my invisible assailant. In vain! He dexterously eluded my grasp, and I stumbled over my portmanteau, which was lying on the floor; but my prompt action revealed who the intruder was, by producing a wild flutter and a frantic cackling! Before my companion could strike a light the mysterious attack was fully explained. The supposed midnight robber and possible assassin was simply a peaceable hen that had gone to roost on my arm, and, on finding her position unsteady, had dug her claws into what she mistook for a roosting pole!

When speaking of the peasantry of the north I have hitherto had in view the inhabitants of the provinces of Old-Novgorod, Tver, Yaroslavl, Nizhni-Novgorod, Kos-

EUROPEAN
RUSSIA
SHOWING
ZONES OF VEGETATION
MINERALS AND
PRINCIPAL RAILWAYS
Scale 90 Statute Miles
Railways
ARCTIC OCEAN
Nova Zemlia
KARA SEA
Kolguev I.
Kola Peninsula
White Sea
Gulf of Bothnia
FOREST ZONE
SIBERIA
ST PETERSBURG
Vologda
Archangel
Vyatka
Perm
Nizhni Novgorod
Kazan
NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL ZONE
Moscow
Smolensk
Kharkov
Kursk
Orel
Tula
Riazan
Tambov
Penza
Saratov
Samara
Orenburg
Ufa
Simbirsk
Astrakhan
Caspian Sea
Aral Sea
Sea of Azov
Black Sea
Crimea
Sevastopol
Odessa
Kherson
Nikolaev
Ekaterinoslav
Kharkov
Kursk
Voronezh
Rostov
Taganrog
Caucasus Mts
Tiflis
Baku
Batoum
Kars
Erzeroum
Trebizond
Sinope
Angora
Smyrna
Constantinople
Adrianople
Sea of Marmora
Dardanelles
Aegean Sea
Mt Athos
Salonica
Monastir
Uskub
Belgrade
Semlin
Mohilev
Minsk
Brest
Lodz
Warsaw
Lublin
Cracow
Lemberg
Tarnopol
Kamenetz
Zhitomir
Kiev
Poltava

tromá, Kazan, and Viatka, and I have founded my remarks chiefly on information collected on the spot. Beyond this lies what may be called the Far North. Though I cannot profess to have the same personal acquaintance with the peasantry of that region, I may perhaps be allowed to insert here some information regarding them which I collected from various trustworthy sources.

If we draw a wavy line eastward from a point a little to the north of St. Petersburg, as in the map showing Zones of Vegetation, we shall have between that line and the Polar Ocean what may be regarded as a distinct, peculiar region, differing in many respects from the rest of Russia. Throughout the whole of it the climate is very severe. For about half of the year the ground is covered by deep snow, and the rivers are frozen. By far the greater part of the land is occupied by forests of pine, fir, larch, and birch, or by vast, unfathomable morasses. The arable land and pasturage taken together form only about one and a half per cent. of the area. The population is scarce—little more than one to the English square mile—and settled chiefly along the banks of the rivers. The peasantry support themselves by fishing, hunting, felling and floating timber, preparing tar and charcoal, cattle-breeding, and, in the extreme north, breeding reindeer.

These are their chief occupations, but the people do not entirely neglect agriculture. They make the most of their short summer by means of a peculiar and ingenious mode of farming, well adapted to the peculiar local conditions. The peasant knows, of course, nothing about agronomical chemistry, but he, as well as his forefathers, have observed that if wood be burnt on a field, and the ashes be mixed with the soil, a good harvest may be confidently expected. On this simple principle his system of farming is based. When spring comes round and the leaves begin to appear on the trees, a band of peasants, armed with their hatchets, proceed to some spot in the woods previously fixed upon. Here they begin to make a clearing. This is no easy matter, for tree-felling is hard and tedious work; but the process does not take so much time as might be expected, for the workmen have been brought up to the trade, and wield

their axes with marvellous dexterity. When they have felled all the trees, great and small, they return to their homes, and think no more about their clearing till the autumn, when they return, in order to strip the fallen trees of their branches, to pick out what they require for building purposes or firewood, and to pile up the remainder in heaps. The logs for building or firewood are dragged away by horses as soon as the first fall of snow has made a good slippery road, but the piles are allowed to remain till the following spring, when they are stirred up with long poles and ignited. The flames rapidly spread in all directions till they join together and form a gigantic bonfire, such as is never seen in more densely populated countries. If the fire does its work properly, the whole of the space is covered with a layer of ashes; and when these have been slightly mixed with soil by means of a light plough, the seed is sown.

On the field prepared in this original fashion is sown barley, rye, or flax; and the harvests, nearly always good, sometimes border on the miraculous. Barley or rye may be expected to produce about sixfold in ordinary years, and they may produce as much as thirtyfold under peculiarly favourable circumstances. The fertility is, however, short-lived. If the soil is poor and stony, not more than two crops can be raised; if it is of a better quality, it may give tolerable harvests for six or seven successive years. In most countries this would be an absurdly expensive way of manuring, for wood is much too valuable a commodity to be used for such a purpose; but in this northern region the forests are boundless, and in the districts where there is no river or stream by which timber may be floated, the trees not used in this way rot from old age. Under these circumstances the system is reasonable, but it must be admitted that it does not give a very large return for the amount of labour expended, and in bad seasons it gives almost no return at all.

The other sources of revenue are scarcely less precarious. With his gun and a little parcel of provisions, the peasant wanders about in the trackless forests, and too often returns after many days with a very light bag; or he starts in autumn

for some distant lake, and comes back after five or six weeks with nothing better than perch and pike. Sometimes he tries his luck at deep-sea fishing. In this case he starts in February—probably on foot—for Kem, on the shore of the White Sea, or perhaps for the more distant Kola, situated on a small river which falls into the Arctic Ocean. There, in company with three or four comrades, he starts on a fishing cruise along the Murman coast, or, it may be, off the coast of Spitzbergen. His gains will depend on the amount caught, for it is a joint venture; but in no case can they be very great, for three-fourths of the fish brought into port belong to the owner of the craft and tackle. Of the sum realised, he brings home perhaps only a small part, for he has a strong temptation to buy rum, tea, and other luxuries, which are very dear in those northern latitudes. If the fishing is good and he resists temptation, he may save as much as 100 roubles—about £10—and thereby live comfortably all the winter; but if the fishing season is bad, he may find himself at the end of it not only with empty pockets, but in debt to the owner of the boat. This debt he may pay off, if he has a horse, by transporting the dried fish to Kargopol, St. Petersburg, or some other market.

It is here in the Far North that the ancient folklore—popular songs, stories, and fragments of epic poetry—has been best preserved; but this is a field on which I need not enter, for the reader can easily find all that he may desire to know on the subject in the brilliant writings of M. Rambaud and the very interesting, conscientious works of the late Mr. Ralston,* which enjoy a high reputation in Russia.

* Rambaud, "La Russie Épique," Paris, 1876; Ralston, "The Songs of the Russian People," London, 1872; and "Russian Folk-Tales," London, 1873.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MIR, OR VILLAGE COMMUNITY

WHEN I had gained a clear notion of the family life and occupations of the peasantry, I turned my attention to the constitution of the village. This was a subject which specially interested me, because I was aware that the *Mir* is the most peculiar of Russian institutions. Long before visiting Russia I had looked into Haxthausen's celebrated work, by which the peculiarities of the Russian village system were first made known to Western Europe, and during my stay in St. Petersburg I had often been informed by intelligent, educated Russians that the rural Commune presented a practical solution of many difficult social problems with which the philosophers and statesmen of the West had long been vainly struggling. "The nations of the West"—such was the substance of innumerable discourses which I had heard—"are at present on the high road to political and social anarchy, and England has the unenviable distinction of being foremost in the race. The natural increase of population, together with the expropriation of the small landholders by the great landed proprietors, has created a dangerous and ever-increasing proletariat—a great disorganised mass of human beings, without homes, without permanent domicile, without property of any kind, without any stake in the existing institutions. Part of these gain a miserable pittance as agricultural labourers, and live in a condition infinitely worse than serfage. The others have been for ever uprooted from the soil, and have collected in the large towns, where they earn a precarious living in the factories and workshops, or swell the ranks of the criminal classes. In England you have no longer a peasantry in the proper sense of the term, and unless some radical measures be very soon adopted, you will never be able to create such a class, for men who have been long

exposed to the unwholesome influences of town life are physically and morally incapable of becoming agriculturists.

"Hitherto," the disquisition proceeded, "England has enjoyed, in consequence of her geographical position, her political freedom, and her vast natural deposits of coal and iron, a wholly exceptional position in the industrial world. Fearing no competition, she has proclaimed the principles of Free Trade, and has inundated the world with her manufactures—using unscrupulously her powerful navy and all the other forces at her command for breaking down every barrier which might check the flood sent forth from Manchester and Birmingham. In that way her hungry proletariat has been fed. But the industrial supremacy of England is drawing to a close. The nations have discovered the perfidious fallacy of Free Trade principles, and are now learning to manufacture for their own wants, instead of paying England enormous sums to manufacture for them. Very soon English goods will no longer find foreign markets, and how will the hungry proletariat then be fed? Already the grain production of England is far from sufficient for the wants of the population, so that, even when the harvest is exceptionally abundant, enormous quantities of wheat are imported from all quarters of the globe. Hitherto this grain has been paid for by the manufactured goods annually exported, but how will it be procured when these goods are no longer wanted by foreign consumers? And what then will the hungry proletariat do?" *

This sombre picture of England's future had often been presented to me, and on nearly every occasion I had been assured that Russia had been saved from these terrible evils by the rural Commune—an institution which, in spite of its simplicity and incalculable utility, West-Europeans seemed utterly incapable of understanding and appreciating.

The reader will now easily conceive with what interest I took to studying this wonderful institution, and with what energy I prosecuted my researches. An institution which

* This passage was written, precisely as it stands, long before the fiscal question was raised by Mr. Chamberlain. It will be found in the first edition of this work, published in 1877. (Vol. I., pp. 179-81.)

professes to solve satisfactorily the most difficult social problems of the future is not to be met with every day, even in Russia, which is specially rich in material for the student of social science.

On my arrival at Ivánovka my knowledge of the institution was of that vague, superficial kind which is commonly derived from men who are fonder of sweeping generalisations and rhetorical declamation than of serious, patient study of phenomena. I knew that the chief personage in a Russian village is the *Sélski Stárosta*, or Village Elder, and that all important Communal affairs are regulated by the *Sélski Skhod*, or Village Assembly. Further, I was aware that the land in the vicinity of the village belongs to the Commune, and is distributed periodically among the members in such a way that every able-bodied peasant possesses a share sufficient, or nearly sufficient, for his maintenance. Beyond this elementary information I knew little or nothing.

My first attempt at extending my knowledge was not very successful. Hoping that my friend Ivan might be able to assist me, and knowing that the popular name for the Commune is *Mir*, which means also "the world," I put to him the direct, simple question, "What is the Mir?"

Ivan was not easily disconcerted, but for once he looked puzzled, and stared at me vacantly. When I endeavoured to explain to him my question, he simply knitted his brows and scratched the back of his head. This latter movement is the Russian peasant's method of accelerating cerebral action; but in the present instance it had no practical result. In spite of his efforts, Ivan could not get much farther than the "Kak vam skazat'?" that is to say, "How am I to tell you?"

It was not difficult to perceive that I had adopted an utterly false method of investigation, and a moment's reflection sufficed to show me the absurdity of my question. I had asked from an uneducated man a philosophical definition, instead of extracting from him material in the form of concrete facts, and constructing therefrom a definition for myself. These concrete facts Ivan was both able and willing to supply; and as soon as I adopted a rational

mode of questioning, I obtained from him all I wanted. The information he gave me, together with the results of much subsequent conversation and reading, I now propose to present to the reader in my own words.

The peasant family of the old type is, as we have just seen, a kind of primitive labour association, in which the members have nearly all things in common. The village may be roughly described as a primitive labour association on a larger scale.

Between these two social units there are many points of analogy. In both there are common interests and common responsibilities. In both there is a principal personage, who is in a certain sense ruler within, and representative as regards the outside world: in the one case called *Khozaïn*, or Head of the Household, and in the other *Stárosta*, or Village Elder. In both the authority of the ruler is limited: in the one case by the adult members of the family, and in the other by the Heads of Households. In both there is a certain amount of common property: in the one case the house and nearly all that it contains, and in the other the arable land and possibly a little pasturage. In both cases there is a certain amount of common responsibility: in the one case for all the debts, and in the other for all the taxes and Communal obligations. And both are protected to a certain extent against the ordinary legal consequences of insolvency, for the family cannot be deprived of its house or necessary agricultural implements, and the Commune cannot be deprived of its land, by importunate creditors.

On the other hand, there are many important points of contrast. The Commune is, of course, much larger than the family, and the mutual relations of its members are by no means so closely interwoven. The members of a family all farm together, and those of them who earn money from other sources are expected to put their savings into the common purse; whilst the households composing a Commune farm independently, and pay into the common treasury only a certain fixed sum.

From these brief remarks the reader will at once perceive that a Russian village is something very different from a

village in our sense of the term, and that the villagers are bound together by ties quite unknown to the English rural population. A family living in an English village has little reason to take an interest in the affairs of its neighbours. The isolation of the individual families is never quite perfect, for man, being a social animal, takes necessarily a certain interest in the affairs of those around him, and this social duty is sometimes fulfilled by the weaker sex with more zeal than is absolutely indispensable to the public welfare; but families may live for many years in the same village without ever becoming conscious of common interests. So long as the Jones family do not commit any culpable breach of public order, such as putting obstructions on the highway or habitually setting their house on fire, their neighbour Brown takes probably no interest in their affairs, and has no ground for interfering with their perfect liberty of action. Amongst the families composing a Russian village such a state of isolation is impossible. The Heads of Households must often meet together and consult in the Village Assembly, and their daily occupations must be influenced by the Communal decrees. They cannot begin to mow the hay or plough the fallow field until the Village Assembly has passed a resolution on the subject. Under the old system, if a peasant became a drunkard, or took some equally efficient means to become insolvent, every family in the village had a right to complain, not merely in the interests of public morality, but from selfish motives, because all the families were collectively responsible for his taxes. This common responsibility for the taxes was abolished by the Emperor in 1903, on the advice of M. Witte, and the other Communal fetters were afterwards gradually relaxed by the Duma, under the influence of M. Stolypin, who was an energetic opponent of the old Communal system. A peasant may now, if he wishes, cease to be a member of the Commune altogether, as soon as he has defrayed all his outstanding obligations, or he may insist on his share of the Communal land being converted into private property.

For the reason given above no peasant could permanently leave the village without the consent of the Commune, and

this consent would not be granted until the applicant gave satisfactory security for the fulfilment of his actual and future liabilities. If a peasant wished to go away for a short time, in order to work elsewhere, he had to obtain a written permission, which served him as a passport during his absence; and he might be recalled at any moment by a Communal decree. In reality he was rarely recalled so long as he sent home regularly the full amount of his taxes—including the dues which he had to pay for the temporary passport—but sometimes the Commune used the power of recall for purposes of extortion. If it became known, for instance, that an absent member was receiving a good salary or otherwise making money, he might one day receive a formal order to return at once to his native village, but he was probably informed at the same time, unofficially, that his presence would be dispensed with if he would send to the Commune a certain specified sum. The money thus sent was generally used by the Commune for convivial purposes. With the relaxing of the Communal fetters already referred to, and of which I shall have occasion to speak later, this abuse should disappear.

In all countries the theory of government and administration differs considerably from the actual practice. Nowhere is this difference greater than in Russia, and in no Russian institution is it greater than in the Village Commune. It is necessary, therefore, to know both theory and practice; and it is well to begin with the former, because it is the simpler of the two. When we have once thoroughly mastered the theory, it is easy to understand the deviations that are made to suit peculiar local conditions.

According, then, to theory, all male peasants in every part of the Empire are inscribed in census lists, which form the basis of the direct taxation. These lists are revised at irregular intervals, and all males alive at the time of the "revision," from the new-born babe to the centenarian, are duly inscribed. Each Commune has a list of this kind, and pays to the Government an annual sum proportionate to the number of names which the list contains, or, in popular language, according to the number of "revision souls." During the intervals between the revisions the financial

authorities take no notice of the births and deaths. A Commune which has a hundred male members at the time of the revision may have in a few years considerably more or considerably less than that number, but it has to pay taxes for a hundred members all the same until a new revision is made for the whole Empire.

Now, in Russia, so far at least as the rural population is concerned, the payment of taxes is inseparably connected with the possession of land. Every peasant who pays taxes is supposed to have a share of the land belonging to the Commune. If the Communal revision lists contain a hundred names, the Communal land ought to be divided into a hundred shares, and each "revision soul" should enjoy his share in return for the taxes which he pays.

The reader who has followed my explanations up to this point may naturally conclude that the taxes paid by the peasants are in reality a species of rent for the land which they enjoy. Such a conclusion would not be altogether justified. When a man rents a bit of land he acts according to his own judgment, and makes a voluntary contract with the proprietor; but the Russian peasant is obliged to pay his taxes whether he desires to enjoy land or not. The theory, therefore, that the taxes are simply the rent of the land will not bear even superficial examination. Equally untenable is the theory that they are a species of land tax. In any reasonable system of land dues the yearly sum imposed bears some kind of proportion to the quantity and quality of the land enjoyed; but in Russia it may be that the members of one Commune possess six acres of bad land, and the members of the neighbouring Commune seven acres of good land, and yet the taxes in both cases are the same. The truth is that the taxes are personal, and are calculated according to the number of male "souls," and the Government does not take the trouble to inquire how the Communal land is distributed. The Commune has to pay into the Imperial Treasury a fixed yearly sum, according to the number of its "revision souls," and distributes the land among its members as it thinks fit.

How, then, does the Commune distribute the land? To this question it is impossible to reply in brief, general terms,

because each Commune acts as it pleases.* Some act strictly according to the theory. These divide their land at the time of the revision into a number of portions or shares corresponding to the number of revision souls, and give to each family a number of shares corresponding to the number of revision souls which it contains. This is from the administrative point of view by far the simplest system. The census list determines how much land each family will enjoy, and the existing tenures are disturbed only by the revisions which take place at irregular intervals.† But, on the other hand, this system has serious defects. The revision list represents merely the numerical strength of the families, and the numerical strength is often not at all in proportion to the working power. Let us suppose, for example, two families, each containing at the time of the revision five male members. According to the census list these two families are equal, and ought to receive equal shares of the land; but in reality it may happen that the one contains a father in the prime of life and four able-bodied sons, whilst the other contains a widow and five little boys. The wants and working power of these two families are, of course, very different, and if the above system of distribution be applied, the man with four sons and a goodly supply of grandchildren will probably find that he has too little land, whilst the widow with her five little boys will find it difficult to cultivate the five shares allotted to her, and utterly impossible to pay the corresponding amount of taxation—for in all cases, it must be remembered, the Communal burdens are distributed in the same proportion as the land.

But why, it may be said, should the widow not accept provisionally the five shares, and let to others the part which she does not require? The balance of rent after payment of the taxes might help her to bring up her young family.

* A long list of the various systems of allotment to be found in individual Communes in different parts of the country is given in the opening chapter of a valuable work by Karélin, entitled *Obshtchinnoye Vladênié v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1893). As my object is to convey to the reader merely a general idea of the institution, I refrain from confusing him by an enumeration of the endless divergences from the original type.

† Since 1719 eleven revisions have been made, the last in 1897. The intervals varied from six to forty-one years.

So it seems to one acquainted only with the rural economy of England, where land is scarce, and always gives a revenue more than sufficient to defray the taxes. But in Russia the possession of a share of Communal land is often not a privilege, but a burden. In some Communes the land is so poor and abundant that it cannot be let at any price. In others the soil will repay cultivation, but a fair rent will not suffice to pay the taxes and dues.

To obviate these inconvenient results of the simpler system, many Communes have adopted the expedient of allotting the land, not according to the number of revision souls, but according to the working power of the families. Thus, in the instance above supposed, the widow would receive perhaps two shares, and the large household, containing five workers, would receive perhaps seven or eight. Since the breaking up of the large families, such inequality as I have supposed is, of course, rare; but inequality of a less extreme kind does still occur, and justifies a departure from the system of allotment according to the revision lists.

Even if the allotment be fair and equitable at the time of the revision, it may soon become unfair and burdensome by the natural fluctuations of the population. Births and deaths may in the course of a very few years entirely alter the relative working power of the various families. The sons of the widow may grow up to manhood, whilst two or three able-bodied members of the other family may be cut off by an epidemic. Thus, long before a new revision takes place, the distribution of the land may be no longer in accordance with the wants and capacities of the various families composing the Commune. To correct this, various expedients are employed. Some Communes transfer particular lots from one family to another, as circumstances demand; whilst others make from time to time, during the intervals between the revisions, a complete redistribution and re-allotment of the land. Of these two systems the former is now the more frequently employed.

The system of allotment adopted depends entirely on the will of the particular Commune. In this respect the Communes enjoy the most complete autonomy, and no peasant

ever dreams of appealing against a Communal decree.* The higher authorities not only abstain from all interference in the allotment of the Communal lands, but remain in profound ignorance as to which system the Communes habitually adopt. Though the Imperial Administration has a most voracious appetite for symmetrically constructed statistical tables—many of them formed chiefly out of materials supplied by the mysterious inner consciousness of the subordinate officials—no attempt has yet been made, so far as I know, to collect statistical data which might throw light on this important subject. In spite of the systematic and persistent efforts of the centralised bureaucracy to regulate minutely all departments of the national life, the rural Communes, which contain about five-sixths of the population, remain in many respects entirely beyond its influence, and even beyond its sphere of vision! But let not the reader be astonished overmuch. He will learn in time that Russia is the land of paradoxes; and meanwhile he is about to receive a still more startling bit of information. In "the great stronghold of Cæsarian despotism and centralised bureaucracy," these Village Communes, containing about five-sixths of the population, are capital specimens of representative Constitutional government of the extreme democratic type!

When I say that the rural Commune is a good specimen of Constitutional government, I use the phrase in the English, and not in the Continental sense. In the Continental languages a Constitutional regime implies the existence of a long, formal document, in which the functions of the various institutions, the powers of the various authorities, and the methods of procedure are carefully defined. Such a document was never heard of in Russian Village Communes, except those belonging to the Imperial Domains, and the special legislation which formerly regulated their affairs was repealed at the time of the Emancipation. At

* This has been somewhat modified by recent legislation. According to the Emancipation Law of 1861, redistribution of the land could take place at any time provided it was voted by a majority of two-thirds at the Village Assembly. By a law of 1893 redistribution cannot take place oftener than once in twelve years, and must receive the sanction of certain local authorities.

the present day the Constitution of all the Village Communes is of the English type—a body of unwritten, traditional conceptions, which have grown up and modified themselves under the influence of everchanging practical necessity. No doubt certain definitions of the functions and mutual relations of the Communal authorities might be extracted from the Emancipation Law and subsequent official documents, but as a rule neither the Village Elder nor the members of the Village Assembly ever heard of such definitions; and yet every peasant knows, as if by instinct, what each of these authorities can do and cannot do. The Commune is, in fact, a living institution, whose spontaneous vitality enables it to dispense with the assistance and guidance of the written law, and its constitution is thoroughly democratic. The Elder represents merely the executive power. The real authority resides in the Assembly, of which all Heads of Households are members.*

The simple procedure, or rather the absence of all formal procedure, at the Assemblies, illustrates admirably the essentially practical character of the institution. The meetings are held in the open air, because in the village there is no building—except the church, which can be used only for religious purposes—large enough to contain all the members; and they almost always take place on Sundays or holidays, when the peasants have plenty of leisure. Any open space may serve as a Forum. The discussions are occasionally very animated, but there is rarely any attempt at speech-making. If any young member should show an inclination to indulge in oratory, he is sure to be unceremoniously interrupted by some of the older members, who have never any sympathy with fine talking. The assemblage has the appearance of a crowd of people who have accidentally come together, and are discussing in little groups subjects of local interest. Gradually some one group, containing two or three peasants who have more moral influence than their fellows, attracts the others, and the discussion becomes general. Two or more peasants may speak

* An attempt was made by Alexander III. in 1884 to bring the Rural Communes under supervision and control by the appointment of rural officials called *Zémskiye Natchálniki*. Of this so-called reform I shall have occasion to speak later.

at a time, and interrupt each other freely—using plain, unvarnished language, not at all parliamentary—and the discussion may become a confused, unintelligible din; but at the moment when the spectator imagines that the consultation is about to be transformed into a free fight, the tumult spontaneously subsides, or perhaps a general roar of laughter announces that someone has been successfully hit by a strong *argumentum ad hominem* or biting personal remark. In any case there is no danger of the disputants coming to blows. No class of men in the world are more good-natured and pacific than the Russian peasantry. When sober they never fight, and even when under the influence of alcohol they are more likely to be violently affectionate than disagreeably quarrelsome. If two of them take to drinking together, the probability is that in a few minutes, though they may never have seen each other before, they will be expressing in very strong terms their mutual regard and affection, confirming their words with an occasional friendly embrace.

Theoretically speaking, the Village Parliament has a Speaker, in the person of the Village Elder. The word Speaker is etymologically less objectionable than the term President, for the personage in question never sits down, but mingles in the crowd like the ordinary members. Objection may be taken to the word on the ground that the Elder speaks much less than many other members, but this may likewise be said of the Speaker of the House of Commons. Whatever we may call him, the Elder is officially the principal personage in the crowd, and wears the insignia of office in the form of a small medal suspended from his neck by a thin brass chain. His duties, however, are extremely light. To call to order those who interrupt the discussion is no part of his functions. If he calls an honourable member "Durák!" (blockhead), or interrupts an orator with a laconic "Moltchi!" (hold your tongue!), he does so in virtue of no special prerogative, but simply in accordance with a time-honoured privilege, which is equally enjoyed by all present, and may be employed with impunity against himself. Indeed, it may be said in general that the phraseology and the procedure are not subjected to any

strict rules. The Elder comes prominently forward only when it is necessary to take the sense of the meeting. On such occasions he may stand back a little from the crowd and say, "Well, Orthodox, have you decided so?" and the crowd will probably shout, "Ládno! ládno!" that is to say, "Agreed! agreed!"

Communal measures are generally carried in this way by acclamation; but it sometimes happens that there is such a diversity of opinion that it is difficult to tell which of the two parties has a majority. In this case the Elder requests the one party to stand to the right and the other to the left. The two groups are then counted, and the minority submits, for no one ever dreams of opposing openly the will of the *Mir*.

During the reign of Nicholas I. an attempt was made to regulate by the written law the procedure of Village Assemblies amongst the peasantry of the State Domains, and among other reforms voting by ballot was introduced; but the new custom never struck root. The peasants did not regard with favour the new method, and persisted in calling it, contemptuously, "playing at marbles." Here, again, we have one of those wonderful and apparently anomalous facts which frequently meet the student of Russian affairs: the Emperor Nicholas I., the Incarnation of Autocracy and the champion of the Reactionary Party throughout Europe, tries to force the ballot-box, the ingenious invention of extreme radicals, on several millions of his subjects!

In the northern provinces, where a considerable portion of the male population is always absent, the Village Assembly generally includes a good many female members. These are women who, on account of the absence or death of their husbands, happen to be for the moment Heads of Households. As such they are entitled to be present, and their right to take part in the deliberations is never called in question. In matters affecting the general welfare of the Commune they rarely speak, and if they do venture to enounce an opinion on such occasions they have little chance of commanding attention, for the Russian peasantry are as yet little imbued with the modern doctrines of female

equality, and express their opinion of female intelligence by the homely adage: "The hair is long, but the mind is short." According to one proverb, seven women have collectively but one soul, and according to a still more ungallant popular saying, women have no souls at all, but only a vapour. Woman, therefore, as woman, is not deserving of much consideration, but a particular woman, as Head of a Household, is entitled to speak on all questions directly affecting the household under her care. If, for instance, it be proposed to increase or diminish her household's share of the land and the burdens, she will be allowed to speak freely on the subject, and even to indulge in personal invective against her male opponents. She thereby exposes herself, it is true, to uncomplimentary remarks; but any which she happens to receive she is pretty sure to repay with interest—referring, perhaps, with pertinent virulence to the domestic affairs of those who attack her. And when argument and invective fail, she can try the effect of pathetic appeal, supported by copious tears.

As the Village Assembly is really a representative institution in the full sense of the term, it reflects faithfully the good and the bad qualities of the rural population. Its decisions are therefore usually characterised by plain, practical common sense, but it is subject to occasional unfortunate aberrations in consequence of pernicious influences, chiefly of an alcoholic kind. An instance of this fact occurred during my sojourn at Ivánovka. The question under discussion was whether a *kabák,* or gin-shop, should be established in the village. A trader from the district town desired to establish one, and offered to pay to the Commune a yearly sum for the necessary permission. The more industrious, respectable members of the Commune, backed by the whole female population, were strongly opposed to the project, knowing full well that a *kabák* would certainly lead to the ruin of more than one household; but the enterprising trader had strong arguments wherewith to seduce a large number of the members, and succeeded in obtaining a decision in his favour.

The Assembly discusses all matters affecting the Communal welfare, and, as these matters have never been legally

defined, its recognised competence is very wide. It fixes the time for making the hay, and the day for commencing the ploughing of the fallow field; it decrees what measures shall be employed against those who do not punctually pay their taxes; it decides whether a new member shall be admitted into the Commune, and whether an old member shall be allowed to change his domicile; it gives or withholds permission to erect new buildings on the Communal land; it prepares and signs all contracts which the Commune makes with one of its own members or with a stranger; it interferes whenever it thinks necessary in the domestic affairs of its members; it elects the Elder—as well as the Communal tax-collector and watchman, where such offices exist—and the Communal herd-boy; above all, it divides and allots the Communal land among the members as it thinks fit.

Of all these various proceedings the English reader may naturally assume that the elections are the most noisy and exciting. In reality this is a mistake. The elections produce little excitement, for the simple reason that, as a rule, no one desires to be elected. Once, it is said, a peasant who had been guilty of some misdemeanour was informed by an Arbiter of the Peace—a species of official of which I shall have occasion to speak in the sequel—that he would be no longer capable of filling any Communal office; and instead of regretting this diminution of his civil rights, he bowed very low, and respectfully expressed his thanks for the new privilege which he had acquired. This anecdote may not be true, but it illustrates the undoubted fact that the Russian peasant regards office as a burden rather than as an honour. There is no civic ambition in those little rural Commonwealths, whilst the privilege of wearing a bronze medal, which commands no respect, and the reception of a few roubles as salary, afford no adequate compensation for the trouble, annoyance, and responsibility which a Village Elder has to bear. The elections are therefore generally very tame and uninteresting. The following description may serve as an illustration.

It is a Sunday afternoon. The peasants, male and female, have turned out in Sunday attire, and the bright costumes of the women help the sunshine to put a little rich

colour into the scene, which is at ordinary times monotonously grey. Slowly the crowd collects on the open space at the side of the church. All classes of the population are represented. On the extreme outskirts are a band of fair-haired, merry children—some of them standing or lying on the grass and gazing attentively at the proceedings, and others running about and amusing themselves. Close to these stand a group of young girls, convulsed with half-suppressed laughter. The cause of their merriment is a youth of some seventeen summers, evidently the wag of the village, who stands beside them with an accordion in his hand, and relates to them in a half-whisper how he is about to be elected Elder, and what mad pranks he will play in that capacity. When one of the girls happens to laugh outright, the matrons who are standing near turn round and scowl; and one of them, stepping forward, orders the offender, in a tone of authority, to go home at once if she cannot behave herself. Crestfallen, the culprit retires, and the youth who is the cause of the merriment makes the incident the subject of a new joke. Meanwhile the deliberations have begun. The majority of the members are chatting together, or looking at a little group composed of three peasants and a woman, who are standing a little apart from the others. Here alone the matter in hand is being really discussed. The woman is explaining, with tears in her eyes, and with a vast amount of useless repetition, that her "old man," who is Elder for the time being, is very ill, and cannot fulfil his duties.

"But he has not yet served a year, and he'll get better," remarks one peasant, evidently the youngest of the little group.

"Who knows?" replies the woman, sobbing. "It is the will of God, but I don't believe that he'll ever put his foot to the ground again. The Feldsher has been four times to see him, and the doctor himself came once, and said that he must be brought to the hospital."

"And why has he not been taken there?"

"How could he be taken? Who is to carry him? Do you think he's a baby? The hospital is forty versts off. If you put him in a cart he would die before he had

gone a verst. And then, who knows what they do with people in the hospital?" This last question contained probably the true reason why the doctor's orders had been disobeyed.

"Very well; that's enough; hold your tongue," says the greybeard of the little group to the woman; and then, turning to the other peasants, remarks, "There is nothing to be done. The Stanovoi (officer of rural police) will be here one of these days, and will make a row again if we don't elect a new Elder. Whom shall we choose?"

As soon as this question is asked, several peasants look down to the ground, or try in some other way to avoid attracting attention, lest their names should be suggested. When the silence has continued a minute or two, the greybeard says, "There is Alexei Ivánof; he has not served yet!"

"Yes, yes, Alexei Ivánof!" shout half a dozen voices, belonging probably to peasants who fear they may be elected.

Alexei protests in the strongest terms. He cannot say that he is ill, because his big ruddy face would give him the lie direct, but he finds half a dozen other reasons why he should not be chosen, and accordingly requests to be excused. But his protestations are not listened to, and the proceedings terminate. A new Village Elder has been duly elected.

Far more important than the elections is the redistribution of the Communal land. It can matter but little to the Head of a Household how the elections go, provided he himself is not chosen. He can accept with perfect equanimity Alexei, or Ivan, or Nikolaï, because the office-bearers have very little influence in Communal affairs. But he cannot remain a passive, indifferent spectator when the division and allotment of the land come to be discussed, for the material welfare of every household depends to a great extent on the amount of land and of burdens which it receives.

In the southern provinces, where the soil is fertile, and the taxes do not exceed the normal rent, the process of division and allotment is comparatively simple. Here each

peasant desires to get as much land as possible, and consequently each household demands all the land to which it is entitled—that is to say, a number of shares equal to the number of its members inscribed in the last revision list. The Assembly has therefore no difficult questions to decide. The Communal revision list determines the number of shares into which the land must be divided, and the number of shares to be allotted to each family. The only difficulty likely to arise is as to which particular shares a particular family shall receive, and this difficulty is commonly obviated by the custom of drawing lots. There may be, it is true, some difference of opinion as to when a redistribution should be made, but this question is easily decided by a vote of the Assembly.

Very different is the process of division and allotment in many Communes of the northern provinces. Here the soil is often very unfertile and the taxes exceed the normal rent, and consequently it may happen that the peasants strive to have as little land as possible. In these cases such scenes as the following may occur.

Ivan is being asked how many shares of the Communal land he will take, and replies in a slow, contemplative way, "I have two sons, and there is myself, so I'll take three shares, or somewhat less if it is your pleasure."

"Less!" exclaims a middle-aged peasant, who is not the Village Elder, but merely an influential member, and takes the leading part in the proceedings. "You talk nonsense. Your two sons are already old enough to help you, and soon they may get married, and so bring you two new female labourers."

"My eldest son," explains Ivan, "always works in Moscow, and the other often leaves me in summer."

"But they both send or bring home money, and when they get married, the wives will remain with you."

"God knows what will be," replies Ivan, passing over in silence the first part of his opponent's remark. "Who knows if they will marry?"

"You can easily arrange that!"

"That I cannot do. The times are changed now. The young people do as they wish, and when they do get married

they all wish to have houses of their own. Three shares will be heavy enough for me!"

"No, no. If they wish to separate from you, they will take some land from you. You must take at least four. The old wives there who have little children cannot take shares according to the number of souls."

"He is a rich muzhik!" says a voice in the crowd. "Lay on him five souls!" (that is to say, give him five shares of the land and of the burdens).

"Five souls I cannot! By God, I cannot!"

"Very well, you shall have four," says the leading spirit to Ivan; and then, turning to the crowd, inquires, "Shall it be so?"

"Four! four!" murmurs the crowd; and the question is settled.

Next comes one of the old wives just referred to. Her husband is a permanent invalid, and she has three little boys, only one of whom is old enough for field labour. If the number of souls were taken as the basis of distribution, she would receive four shares; but she would never be able to pay four shares of the Communal burdens. She must therefore receive less than that amount. When asked how many she will take, she replies with downcast eyes, "As the Mir decides, so be it!"

"Then you must take three."

"What do you say, little father?" cries the woman, throwing off suddenly her air of submissive obedience. "Do you hear that, ye Orthodox? They want to lay upon me three souls! Was such a thing ever heard of? Since St. Peter's Day my husband has been bedridden—bewitched, it seems, for nothing does him good. He cannot put a foot to the ground—all the same as if he were dead; only he eats bread!"

"You talk nonsense," says a neighbour; "he was in the kabák (gin-shop) last week."

"And you!" retorts the woman, wandering from the subject in hand; "what did *you* do last parish fête? Was it not you who got drunk and beat your wife till she roused the whole village with her shrieking? And no further gone than last Sunday—pfu!"

"Listen!" says the old man sternly, cutting short the torrent of invective. "You must take at least two shares and a half. If you cannot manage it yourself, you can get someone to help you."

"How can that be? Where am I to get the money to pay a labourer?" asks the woman, with much wailing and a flood of tears. "Have pity, ye Orthodox, on the poor orphans! God will reward you"; and so on, and so on.

I need not weary the reader with a further description of these scenes, which are always very long and sometimes violent. All present are deeply interested, for the allotment of the land is by far the most important event in Russian peasant life, and the arrangement cannot be made without endless talking and discussion. After the number of shares for each family has been decided, the distribution of the lots gives rise to new difficulties. The families who have plentifully manured their land strive to get back their old lots, and the Commune respects their claims so far as these are consistent with the new arrangement; but often it happens that it is impossible to conciliate private rights and Communal interests, and in such cases the former are sacrificed in a way that would not be tolerated by men of Anglo-Saxon race. This leads, however, to no serious consequences. The peasants are accustomed to work together in this way, to make concessions for the Communal welfare, and to bow unreservedly to the will of the *Mir*. I know of many instances where the peasants have set at defiance the authority of the police, of the provincial governor, and of the central Government itself, but I have never heard of any instance where the will of the *Mir* was openly opposed by one of its members.

In the preceding pages I have repeatedly spoken about "shares of the Communal land." To prevent misconception I must explain carefully what this expression means. A share does not mean simply a plot or parcel of land; on the contrary, it always contains at least four, and may contain a large number of distinct plots. We have here a new point of difference between the Russian village and the villages of Western Europe.

Communal land in Russia is of three kinds: the land on which the village is built, the arable land, and the meadow or hay-field, if the village is fortunate enough to possess one. On the first of these each family possesses a house and garden, which are the hereditary property of the family, and are never affected by the periodical redistributions. The other two kinds are both subject to redistribution, but on somewhat different principles.

The whole of the Communal arable land is first of all divided into three fields, to suit the triennial rotation of crops already described, and each field is divided into a number of long, narrow strips—corresponding to the number of male members in the Commune—as nearly as possible equal to each other in area and quality. Sometimes it is necessary to divide the field into several portions, according to the quality of the soil, and then to subdivide each of these portions into the requisite number of strips. Thus in all cases every household possesses at least one strip in each field; and in those cases where subdivision is necessary, every household possesses a strip in each of the portions into which the field is subdivided. It often happens, therefore, that the strips are very narrow, and the portions belonging to each family very numerous. Strips six feet wide are by no means rare. In 124 villages of the province of Moscow, regarding which I have special information, they varied in width from three to 45 yards, with an average of 11 yards. Of these narrow strips a household may possess as many as thirty in a single field! The complicated process of division and subdivision is accomplished by the peasants themselves, with the aid of simple measuring-rods, and the accuracy of the result is truly marvellous.

The meadow, which is reserved for the production of hay, is divided into the same number of shares as the arable land. There, however, the division and distribution take place, not at irregular intervals, but annually. Every year, on a day fixed by the Assembly, the villagers proceed in a body to this part of their property, and divide it into the requisite number of portions. Lots are then cast, and each family at once mows the portion allotted to it. In some Communes the meadow is mown by all the peasants in common, and the

hay afterwards distributed by lot among the families; but this system is by no means so frequently used.

As the whole of the Communal land thus resembles to some extent a big farm, it is necessary to make certain rules concerning cultivation. A family may sow what it likes in the land allotted to it, but all families must at least conform to the accepted system of rotation. In like manner, a family cannot begin the autumn ploughing before the appointed time, because it would thereby interfere with the rights of the other families, who use the fallow field as pasturage.

It is not a little strange that this primitive system of land tenure should have succeeded in living into the twentieth century, and still more remarkable that the institution of which it forms an essential part should be regarded by many intelligent people as one of the great institutions of the future, and almost as a panacea for social and political evils. The explanation of these facts will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX

HOW THE COMMUNE HAS BEEN PRESERVED, AND WHAT IT IS TO EFFECT IN THE FUTURE

THE reader is probably aware that immediately after the Crimean War Russia was subjected to a series of sweeping reforms, including the Emancipation of the serfs and the creation of a new system of local self-government, and he may naturally wonder how it came to pass that a curious, primitive institution like the rural Commune succeeded in weathering the bureaucratic hurricane. This strange phenomenon I now proceed to explain, partly because the subject is in itself interesting, and partly because I hope thereby to throw some light on the peculiar intellectual condition of the Russian educated classes.

When it became evident, in 1857, that the serfs were about to be emancipated, it was at first pretty generally supposed that the rural Commune would be entirely abolished, or at least radically modified. At that time many Russians were enthusiastic, indiscriminate admirers of English institutions, and believed, in common with the orthodox school of political economists, that England had acquired her commercial and industrial superiority by adopting the principle of individual liberty and unrestricted competition, or, as French writers term it, the "*laissez faire*" principle. This principle is plainly inconsistent with the rural Commune, which compels the rural population to possess land, prevents an enterprising peasant from acquiring the land of his less enterprising neighbours, and places very considerable restrictions on the freedom of action of the individual members. Accordingly it was assumed that the rural Commune, being inconsistent with the modern spirit of progress, would find no place in the new regime of liberty which was about to be inaugurated.

No sooner had these ideas been announced in the Press

than they called forth strenuous protests. In the crowd of protestors were two well-defined groups. On the one hand there were the so-called Slavophils, a small band of patriotic, highly educated Moscovites, who were strongly disposed to admire everything specifically Russian, and who habitually refused to bow the knee to the wisdom of Western Europe. These gentlemen, in a special organ which they had recently founded, pointed out to their countrymen that the Commune was a venerable and peculiarly Russian institution, which had mitigated in the past the baneful influence of serfage, and would certainly in the future confer inestimable benefits on the emancipated peasantry. The other group was animated by a very different spirit. They had no sympathy with national peculiarities, and no reverence for hoary antiquity. That the Commune was specifically Russian or Slavonic, and a remnant of primitive times, was in their eyes anything but a recommendation in its favour. Cosmopolitan in their tendencies, and absolutely free from all archæological sentimentality, they regarded the institution from the purely utilitarian point of view. They agreed, however, with the Slavophils in thinking that its preservation would have a beneficial influence on the material and moral welfare of the peasantry.

For the sake of convenience it is necessary to designate the members of this latter group by some definite name, but I confess I have some difficulty in making a choice. I do not wish to call them Socialists, because many people habitually and involuntarily attach a stigma to the word, and believe that all to whom the term is applied must be first-cousins to the *pétroleuses*. To avoid misconceptions of this kind, it will be well to designate them simply by the organ which most ably represented their views, and to call them the adherents of *The Contemporary*.

The Slavophils and the adherents of *The Contemporary*, though differing widely from each other in many respects, had the same immediate object in view with regard to the rural Commune, and they accordingly worked together. With great ingenuity they contended that the Communal system of land tenure had much greater advantages, and was attended with much fewer inconveniences than people

generally supposed. But they did not confine themselves to these immediate practical advantages, which had very little interest for the general reader. The writers in *The Contemporary* explained that the importance of the rural Commune lies, not in its actual condition, but in its capabilities of development, and they drew, with prophetic eye, pictures of the happy rural Commune of the future. Let me give here, as an illustration, one of these prophetic descriptions: "Thanks to the spread of primary and technical education, the peasants have become well acquainted with the science of agriculture, and are always ready to undertake in common the necessary improvements. They no longer exhaust the soil by exporting the grain, but sell merely certain technical products containing no mineral ingredients. For this purpose the Communes possess distilleries, starch-works, and the like, and the soil thereby retains its original fertility. The scarcity induced by the natural increase of the population is counteracted by improved methods of cultivation. If the Chinese, who know nothing of natural science, have succeeded by purely empirical methods in perfecting agriculture to such an extent that a whole family can support itself on a few square yards of land, what may not the European do with the help of chemistry, botanical physiology, and the other natural sciences?"

Coming back from the possibilities of the future to the actualities of the present, these ingenious and eloquent writers pointed out that in the rural Commune Russia possessed a sure preventive against the greatest evil of West-European social organisation, the Proletariat. Here the Slavophils could strike in with their favourite refrain about the rotten social condition of Western Europe; and their temporary allies, though they habitually scoffed at the Slavophil jeremiads, had no reason for the moment to contradict them. Very soon the Proletariat became, for the educated classes, a species of bugbear, and the reading public were converted to the doctrine that the Communal institutions should be preserved as a means of excluding the monster from Russia.

This fear of what is vaguely termed the Proletariat is still occasionally to be met with in Russia, and I have often taken

pains to discover precisely what is meant by the term. I cannot, however, say that my efforts have been completely successful. The monster seems to be as vague and shadowy as the awful forms which Milton placed at the gate of the infernal regions. At one moment he seems to be simply our old enemy Pauperism, but when we approach a little nearer we find that he expands to colossal dimensions, so as to include all who do not possess inalienable landed property. In short, he turns out to be, on examination, as vague and undefinable as a good bugbear ought to be; and this vagueness contributed probably not a little to his success.

The influence which the idea of the Proletariat exercised on the public mind and on the legislation at the time of the Emancipation is a very notable fact, and well worthy of attention, because it helps to illustrate a point of difference between Russians and Englishmen.

Englishmen are, as a rule, too much occupied with the multifarious concerns of the present to look much ahead into the distant future. We profess, indeed, to regard with horror the maxim, *Après nous le déluge!* and we should probably annihilate with our virtuous indignation anyone who should boldly profess the principle. And yet we often act almost as if we were really partisans of that heartless creed. When called upon to consider the interests of future generations, we declare that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," and stigmatise as visionaries and dreamers all who seek to withdraw our attention from the present. A modern Cassandra who confidently predicts the near exhaustion of our coal-fields, or graphically describes a crushing national disaster that must some day overtake us, may attract public attention for a few weeks; but when we learn that the misfortune is not to take place in our time, we placidly remark that future generations must take care of themselves, and that we cannot reasonably be expected to bear their burdens. When we are obliged to legislate, we proceed in a cautious, tentative way, and are quite satisfied with any homely, simple remedies that common sense and experience may suggest, without taking the trouble to inquire whether the remedy adopted is in accordance with scientific theories. In short, there is a certain truth in those

"famous prophetick pictures" spoken of by Stillingfleet, which "represent the fate of England by a mole, a creature blind and busy, continually working under ground."

In Russia we find the opposite extreme. There the reformers have been trained, not in the arena of practical politics, but in the school of political speculation; and as soon as they begin to examine some simple matter with a view to legislation, it at once becomes a "question," and flies up into the elevated sphere of political and social science. Instead of feeling their way cautiously among the practical difficulties which they chance to encounter, they at once look far ahead, map out boldly with the assistance of foreign authorities the whole region which lies before them, and advance with gigantic strides according to the newest political theories. Men trained in this way cannot rest satisfied with homely remedies which merely alleviate the evils of the moment. They wish to "tear up evil by the roots," and to legislate for future generations as well as for themselves.

This tendency was peculiarly strong at the time of the Emancipation. The educated classes were profoundly convinced that the system of Nicholas I. had been a mistake, and that a new and brighter era was about to dawn upon the country. Everything had to be reformed. The whole social and political edifice had to be reconstructed on entirely new principles.

Let us imagine the position of a man who, having no practical acquaintance with building, suddenly finds himself called upon to construct a large house, containing all the newest appliances for convenience and comfort. What will his first step be? Probably he will proceed at once to study the latest authorities on architecture and construction, and when he has mastered the general principles he will come down gradually to the details. This is precisely what the Russians did when they found themselves called upon to reconstruct the political and social edifice. They eagerly consulted the most recent English, French, and German writers on social and political science, and here it was that they made the acquaintance of the Proletariat.

People who are in the habit of reading books of travel without ever leaving their own country are very apt to acquire

exaggerated notions regarding the hardships and dangers of uncivilised life. They read about savage tribes, daring robbers, ferocious wild beasts, poisonous snakes, deadly fevers, and the like; and they naturally wonder how a human being can exist for a week among such dangers. But if they happen thereafter to visit the countries described, they discover to their surprise that, though the descriptions may not have been exaggerated, life under such conditions is much easier than they supposed. Now the Russians who heard a great deal about the Proletariat on the eve of the Emancipation were very much like the people who remain at home and devour books of travel. They gained exaggerated notions, and learned to fear the Proletariat much more than we do, who habitually live in the midst of it. Of course it is quite possible that their view of the subject is truer than ours, and that we may some day, like the people who live tranquilly on the slopes of a volcano, be rudely awakened from our fancied security. But this is an entirely different question. I am at present not endeavouring to justify our habitual callousness with regard to social dangers, but simply seeking to explain why the Russians, who have little or no practical acquaintance with pauperism, should have taken such elaborate precautions against it.

But how can the preservation of the Communal institutions lead to this "consummation devoutly to be wished," and how far are the precautions likely to be successful?

Those who have studied the mysteries of social science have generally come to the conclusion that the Proletariat has been formed chiefly by the expropriation of the peasantry or small landholders, and that its formation might be prevented, or at least retarded, by any system of legislation which would secure the possession of land for the peasants and prevent them from being uprooted from the soil. Now it must be admitted that the Russian Communal system is admirably adapted for this purpose. About one-half of the arable land has been reserved for the peasantry, and cannot be encroached on by the great landowners or the capitalists, and every adult peasant, roughly speaking, has a right to a share of this land. When I have said that the peasantry compose about five-sixths of the population, and that it is

extremely difficult for a peasant to sever his connection with the rural Commune, it will be at once evident that, if the theories of social philosophers are correct, and if the sanguine expectations entertained in many quarters regarding the permanence of the present Communal institutions are destined to be realised, there is little or no danger of a numerous Proletariat being formed, and the Russians are justified in maintaining, as they often do, that they have successfully solved one of the most important and most difficult of social problems.

But is there any reasonable chance of these sanguine expectations being realised?

This is, doubtless, a most complicated and difficult question, but it cannot be shirked. However sceptical we may be with regard to social panaceas of all sorts, we cannot dismiss with a few hackneyed phrases a gigantic experiment in social science involving the material and moral welfare of many millions of human beings. On the other hand, I do not wish to exhaust the reader's patience by a long series of multifarious details and conflicting arguments. What I propose to do, therefore, is to state in a few words the conclusions at which I have arrived, after a careful study of the question in all its bearings, and to indicate in a general way how I have arrived at these conclusions.

If Russia were content to remain a purely agricultural country of the Sleepy Hollow type, and if her Government were to devote all its energies to maintaining economic and social stagnation, the rural Commune might perhaps prevent the formation of a large Proletariat in the future, as it has tended to prevent it for centuries in the past. The periodical redistributions of the Communal land would secure to every family a portion of the soil, and when the population became too dense, the evils arising from inordinate subdivision of the land might be obviated by a carefully regulated system of emigration to the outlying, thinly populated provinces. All this sounds very well in theory, but experience is proving that it cannot be carried out in practice. In Russia, as in Western Europe, the struggle for life, even among the conservative agricultural classes, is becoming yearly more and more intense, and is producing both the desire and the neces-

sity for greater freedom of individual character and effort, so that each man may make his way in the world according to the amount of his intelligence, energy, spirit of enterprise, and tenacity of purpose. Whatever institutions tend to fetter the individual and maintain a dead level of mediocrity have little chance of subsisting for any great length of time, and it must be admitted that among such institutions, the rural Commune in its present form occupies a prominent place. All its members must possess, in principle if not always in practice, an equal share of the soil and must practise the same methods of agriculture, and when a certain inequality has been created by individual effort it is in great measure wiped out by a redistribution of the Communal land. No doubt in practice the injustice and inconveniences of the system, being always tempered and corrected by ingenious compromises suggested by long experience, are not nearly so great as the mere theorist might naturally suppose; but they are quite serious enough to prevent the permanent maintenance of the institution, and already there are ominous indications of the coming change, as I shall explain in the sequel. Before dismissing this complicated question, we have to remember that Russia is rapidly becoming a great industrial and commercial country, and we must, therefore, consider how the rural Commune affects, and is affected by, the constantly increasing proletariat of the towns.

In Western Europe the great centres of industry have uprooted from the soil and collected in the towns a large proportion of the rural population. Those who yielded to this attractive influence severed gradually all connection with their native villages, became unfit for field labour, and were transformed into artisans or factory workers. In Russia this transformation was impeded by the Communal institutions. The peasant might work during the greater part of his life in the towns, but he did not thereby sever his connection with his native village. He remained, whether he desired it or not, a member of the Commune, possessing a share of the Communal land, and liable for a share of the Communal burdens. During his residence in the town, his wife and family remained at home, and thither he himself sooner or later returned. In this way a class of hybrids—

half peasants, half artisans—was created, and the formation of a town proletariat was greatly retarded.

The existence of this hybrid class is sometimes cited as a beneficent result of the Communal institutions. The artisans and factory labourers, it is said, have thus always a home to which they can retire when thrown out of work or overtaken by old age, and their children are brought up in the country, instead of being reared among the debilitating influences of overcrowded cities. Every common labourer has, in short, by this ingenious contrivance, some small capital and a country residence.

In the present transitional state of Russian society, this peculiar arrangement is at once natural and convenient, but amidst its advantages it has many serious defects. The unnatural separation of the artisan from his wife and family leads to very undesirable results, well known to all who are familiar with the details of peasant life in the northern provinces. And whatever its advantages and defects may be, it cannot be permanently retained. At the present time the native industry is still in its infancy. Protected by the tariff from foreign competition, and too few in number to produce a strong competition among themselves, the existing factories can give to their owners a large revenue without any strenuous exertion. Manufacturers can therefore allow themselves many little liberties, which would be quite inadmissible if the price of manufactured goods were lowered by brisk competition. Ask a Lancashire manufacturer if he could allow a large portion of his workers to go yearly to Cornwall or Caithness to mow a field of hay or reap a few acres of wheat or oats! And if Russia is to make great industrial progress, the manufacturers of Moscow, Lodz, Ivánovo, and Shui will some day be as hard pressed as are those of Bradford and Manchester. The invariable tendency of modern industry, and the secret of its progress, is the ever-increasing division of labour, and how can this principle be applied if the artisans insist on remaining agriculturists?

The interests of agriculture, too, are opposed to the old system. Agriculture cannot be expected to make progress, or even to be tolerably productive, if it is left in great measure to women and children. At present it is not desir-

able that the link which binds the factory worker or artisan with the village should be at once severed, for in the neighbourhood of the large factories there is often no proper accommodation for the families of the workers, and agriculture, as at present practised, can still be carried on, though the Head of the Household happens to be absent. But the system must be regarded as simply temporary, and the disruption of large families—a phenomenon of which I have already spoken—renders its application more and more difficult.

During the last few years, in certain influential quarters, a reaction has taken place with regard to the supposed advantages of the Communal institutions. A revolutionary agrarian movement which swept over European Russia in 1905-7 showed that the peasantry were sadly wanting in a proper respect for the sanctity of individual property in land, and it was generally thought that this defect was in great measure due to the prevalence of Communal tenure. At the same time the idea that it was well to have a low level of material prosperity rather than a higher level, disfigured by pauperism, was gradually disappearing before the spirit of enterprise and individual initiative. These new currents of thought were regarded with approval by M. Stolypin, the Prime Minister, and he succeeded in passing through the Duma an agrarian law which struck at the root of the Communal system. Of this I shall have more to say hereafter.

CHAPTER X

FINNISH AND TARTAR VILLAGES

WHEN talking one day with a landed proprietor who lived near Ivánovka, I accidentally discovered that in a district at some distance to the north-east there were certain villages the inhabitants of which did not understand Russian, and habitually used a peculiar language of their own. With an illogical hastiness worthy of a genuine ethnologist, I at once assumed that these must be the remnants of some aboriginal race.

"Des aborigènes!" I exclaimed, unable to recall the Russian equivalent for the term, and knowing that my friend understood French. "Doubtless the remains of some ancient race who formerly held the country, and are now rapidly disappearing. Have you any Aborigines Protection Society in this part of the world?"

My friend had evidently great difficulty in imagining what an Aborigines Protection Society could be, and promptly assured me that there was nothing of the kind in Russia. On being told that such a society might render valuable services by protecting the weaker against the stronger race, and collecting important materials for the new science of Social Embryology, he looked thoroughly mystified. As to the new science, he had never heard of it, and as to protection, he thought that the inhabitants of the villages in question were quite capable of protecting themselves. "I could invent," he added, with a malicious smile, "a society for the protection of *all* peasants, but I am quite sure that the authorities would not allow me to carry out my idea."

My ethnological curiosity was thoroughly aroused, and I endeavoured to awaken a similar feeling in my friend by hinting that we had at hand a promising field for discoveries

which might immortalise the fortunate explorers; but my efforts were in vain. The old gentleman was a portly, indolent man, of phlegmatic temperament, who thought more of comfort than of immortality in the terrestrial sense of the term. To my proposal that we should start at once on an exploring expedition, he replied calmly that the distance was considerable, that the roads were muddy, and that there was nothing to be learned. The villages in question were very like other villages, and their inhabitants lived, to all intents and purposes, in the same way as their Russian neighbours. If they had any secret peculiarities they would certainly not divulge them to a stranger, for they were notoriously silent, gloomy, morose, and uncommunicative. Everything that was known about them, my friend assured me, might be communicated in a few words. They belonged to a Finnish tribe called Korelli, and had been transported to their present settlements in comparatively recent times. In answer to my questions as to how, when, and by whom they had been transported thither, my informant replied that it had been the work of Ivan the Terrible.

Though I knew at that time little of Russian history, I suspected that the last assertion was invented on the spur of the moment in order to satisfy my troublesome curiosity, and accordingly I determined not to accept it without verification. The result showed how careful the traveller should be in accepting the testimony of "intelligent, well-informed natives." On further investigation I discovered, not only that the story about Ivan the Terrible was a pure invention —whether of my friend or of the popular imagination, which always uses heroic names as pegs on which to hang traditions, I know not—but also that my first theory was correct. These Finnish peasants turned out to be a remnant of the aborigines, or at least of the oldest known inhabitants of the district. Men of the same race, but bearing different tribal names, such as Finns, Tcheremiss, Tchuvash, Mordvá, Votyaks, Permyaks, Zyryanye, Voguls, are to be found in considerable numbers all over the northern provinces, from the Gulf of Bothnia to Western Siberia, as well as in the provinces bordering the Middle Volga as far

south as Penza, Simbirsk, and Tambov.* The Russian peasants, who now compose the great mass of the population, are the intruders.

I had long taken a deep interest in what learned Germans call the *Völkerwanderung*—that is to say, the migrations of peoples during the gradual dissolution of the Roman Empire, and it had often occurred to me that the most approved authorities, who had expended an infinite amount of learning on the subject, had not always taken the trouble to investigate the nature of the process. It is not enough to know that a race or tribe extended its dominions or changed its geographical position. We ought at the same time to inquire whether it expelled, exterminated, or absorbed the former inhabitants, and how the expulsion, extermination, or absorption was effected. Now, of these three processes, absorption may have been more frequent than is commonly supposed, and it seemed to me that in Northern Russia this process might be conveniently studied. A thousand years ago the whole of Northern Russia was peopled by Finnish pagan tribes, and at the present day the greater part of it is occupied by peasants who speak the language of Moscow, profess the Orthodox faith, present in their physiognomy no striking peculiarities, and appear to the superficial observer pure Russians. And we have no reason to suppose that the former inhabitants were expelled or exterminated, or that they gradually died out from contact with the civilisation and vices of a higher race. History records no wholesale Finnish migrations like that of the Kalmyks, and no war of extermination; and statistics prove that among the remnants of those primitive races the population increases as rapidly as among the Russian peasantry.† From these facts I concluded that the Finnish aborigines had been simply absorbed, or, rather, were being absorbed, by the Slavonic intruders.

This conclusion has since been confirmed by observation.

* The semi-official "Statesman's Handbook for Russia" enumerates fourteen different tribes with an aggregate of about 4,650,000 souls, but these numbers must not be regarded as having any pretensions to accuracy. The best authorities differ widely in their estimates.

† This latter statement is made on the authority of Popov ("Zyryanye i zyryanski krai," Moscow, 1874) and Toheremshanski ("Opisanié Orenburgskoi Gubernii," Ufa, 1859)

During my wanderings in these northern provinces I have found villages in every stage of Russification. In one, everything seemed thoroughly Finnish: the inhabitants had a reddish olive skin, very high cheek-bones, obliquely set eyes, and a peculiar costume; none of the women, and very few of the men, could understand Russian, and any Russian who visited the place was regarded as a foreigner. In a second, there were already some Russian inhabitants; the others had lost something of their pure Finnish type, many of the men had discarded the old costume and spoke Russian fluently, and a Russian visitor was no longer shunned. In a third, the Finnish type was still further weakened: all the men spoke Russian, and nearly all the women understood it; the old male costume had entirely disappeared, and the old female costume was rapidly following it; while intermarriage with the Russian population was no longer rare. In a fourth, intermarriage had almost completely done its work, and the old Finnish element could be detected merely in certain peculiarities of physiognomy and pronunciation.*

The process of Russification may be likewise observed in the manner of building the houses and in the methods of farming, which show plainly that the Finnish races did not obtain rudimentary civilisation from the Slavs. Whence, then, was it derived? Was it obtained from some other race, or is it indigenous? These are questions which I have no means of answering.

A Positivist poet—or if that be a contradiction in terms, let us say a Positivist who wrote verses—once composed an appeal to the fair sex, beginning with the words—

"Pourquoi, O femmes, restez-vous en arrière?"

The question might have been addressed to the women in these Finnish villages. Like their sisters in France, they are much more conservative than the men, and oppose much more stubbornly the Russian influence. On the other hand, like women in general, when they do begin to change, they

* One of the most common peculiarities of pronunciation is the substitution of the sound of *ts* for that of *tch*, which I found almost universal over a large area.

change more rapidly. This is seen especially in the matter of costume. The men adopt the Russian costume very gradually; the women adopt it at once. As soon as a single woman gets a gaudy Russian dress, every other woman in the village feels envious and impatient till she has done likewise. I remember once visiting a Mordvá village when this critical point had been reached, and a very characteristic incident occurred. In the preceding villages through which I had passed I had tried in vain to buy a female costume, and I again made the attempt. This time the result was very different. A few minutes after I had expressed my wish to purchase a costume, the house in which I was sitting was besieged by a great crowd of women, holding in their hands articles of wearing apparel. In order to make a selection I went out into the crowd, but the desire to find a purchaser was so general and so ardent that I was regularly mobbed. The women, shouting "Kupí! kupí!" ("Buy! buy!"), and struggling with each other to get near me, were so importunate that I had at last to take refuge in the house, to prevent my own costume from being torn to shreds. But even there I was not safe, for the women followed at my heels, and a considerable amount of good-natured violence had to be employed to expel the intruders.

It is especially interesting to observe the transformation of nationality in the sphere of religious conceptions. The Finns remained pagans long after the Russians had become Christians, but at the present time the whole population, from the eastern boundary of Finland Proper to the Ural Mountains, are officially described as members of the Greek Orthodox Church. The manner in which this change of religion was effected is well worthy of attention.

The old religion of the Finnish tribes, if we may judge from the fragments which still remain, had, like the people themselves, a thoroughly practical, prosaic character. Their theology consisted not of abstract dogmas, but merely of simple prescriptions for the ensuring of material welfare. Even at the present day, in the districts not completely Russified, their prayers are plain, unadorned requests for a good harvest, plenty of cattle, and the like, and are expressed in a tone of childlike familiarity that sounds strange in our

ears. They make no attempt to veil their desires with mystic solemnity, but ask, in simple, straightforward fashion, that God should make the barley ripen and the cow calve successfully, that He should prevent their horses from being stolen, and that He should help them to gain money to pay their taxes.

Their religious ceremonies have, so far as I have been able to discover, no hidden mystical signification, and are for the most part rather magical rites for averting the influence of malicious spirits, or freeing themselves from the unwelcome visits of their departed relatives. For this latter purpose many, even of those who are officially Christians, proceed at stated seasons to the graveyards, and place an abundant supply of cooked food on the graves of their relations who have recently died, requesting the departed to accept this meal, and not to return to their old homes, where their presence is no longer desired. Though more of the food is eaten at night by the village dogs than by the famished spirits, the custom is believed to have a powerful influence in preventing the dead from wandering about at night and frightening the living. If it be true, as I am inclined to believe, that tombstones were originally used for keeping the dead in their graves, then it must be admitted that in the matter of "laying" ghosts the Finns have shown themselves much more humane than other races. It may, however, be suggested that in the original home of the Finns —"*le berceau de la race*," as French ethnologists say—big stones could not easily be procured, and that the custom of feeding the dead was adopted as a *pis aller*. The decision of the question must be left to those who know where the original home of the Finns was.

As the Russian peasantry, knowing little or nothing of theology, and placing implicit confidence in rites and ceremonies, did not differ very widely from the pagan Finns in the matter of religious conceptions, the friendly contact of the two races naturally led to a curious blending of the two religions. The Russians adopted many customs from the Finns, and the Finns adopted still more from the Russians. When Yumala and the other Finnish deities did not do as they were desired, their worshippers naturally

applied for protection or assistance to the Madonna and the "Russian God." If their own traditional magic rites did not suffice to ward off evil influences, they naturally tried the effect of crossing themselves, as the Russians do in moments of danger. All this may seem strange to us who have been taught from our earliest years that religion is something quite different from spells, charms, and incantations, and that of all the various religions in the world one alone is true, all the others being false. But we must remember that the Finns have had a very different education. They do not distinguish religion from magic rites, and they have never been taught that other religions are less true than their own. For them the best religion is the one which contains the most potent spells, and they see no reason why less powerful religions should not be blended therewith. Their deities are not jealous gods, and do not insist on having a monopoly of devotion; and in any case they cannot do much injury to those who have placed themselves under the protection of a more powerful divinity.

This simple-minded eclecticism often produces a singular mixture of Christianity and paganism. Thus, for instance, at the harvest festivals, Tchuvash peasants have been known to pray first to their own deities, and then to St. Nicholas the miracle-worker, who is the favourite saint of the Russian peasantry. Such dual worship is sometimes even recommended by the Yomzi—a class of men who correspond to the medicine-men among the Red Indians—and the prayers are on these occasions couched in the most familiar terms. Here is a specimen given by a Russian who has specially studied the language and customs of this interesting people:* "Look here, O Nicholas-god! Perhaps my neighbour, little Michael, has been slandering me to you, or perhaps he will do so. If he does, don't believe him. I have done him no ill, and wish him none. He is a worthless boaster and a babbler. He does not really honour you, and merely plays the hypocrite. But I honour you from my heart; and, behold, I place a taper before you!" Sometimes incidents occur which display a still more curious blending of the two religions. Thus a Tcheremiss, on one occasion, in conse-

* Mr. Zolotnitski, "Tchuvasko-russki slovár," p. 167.

quence of a serious illness, sacrificed a young foal to our Lady of Kazan! *

Though the Finnish beliefs affected to some extent the Russian peasantry, the Russian faith ultimately prevailed. This can be explained without taking into consideration the inherent superiority of Christianity over all forms of paganism. The Finns had no organised priesthood, and consequently never offered a systematic opposition to the new faith; the Russians, on the contrary, had a regular hierarchy in close alliance with the civil administration. In the principal villages Christian churches were built, and some of the police officers vied with the ecclesiastical officials in the work of making converts. At the same time there were other influences tending in the same direction. If a Russian practised Finnish superstitions he exposed himself to disagreeable consequences of a temporal kind; if, on the contrary, a Finn adopted the Christian religion, the temporal consequences that could result were all advantageous to him.

Many of the Finns gradually became Christians almost unconsciously. The ecclesiastical authorities were extremely moderate in their demands. They insisted on no religious knowledge, and merely demanded that the converts should be baptised. The converts, failing to understand the spiritual significance of the ceremony, commonly offered no resistance, so long as the immersion was performed in summer. So little repugnance, indeed, did they feel, that on some occasions, when a small reward was given to those who consented, some of the new converts wished the ceremony to be repeated several times. The chief objection to receiving the Christian faith lay in the long and severe fasts imposed by the Greek Orthodox Church; but this difficulty was overcome by assuming that they need not be strictly observed. At first, in some districts, it was popularly believed that the Icons informed the Russian priests against those who did not fast as the Church prescribed; but experience gradually exploded this theory. Some of the more prudent converts,

* Similar practices seem to have existed in England at the time of the introduction of Christianity. The Venerable Bede relates that Redwald of East Anglia tried to serve at the same time Christ and his former gods, for he had in the same temple a big altar to Christ and a small one on which he was accustomed to immolate victims to devils.

however, to prevent all possible tale-telling, took the precaution of turning the face of the Icon to the wall when prohibited meats were about to be eaten!

This gradual conversion of the Finnish tribes, effected without any intellectual revolution in the minds of the converts, had very important temporal consequences. Community of faith led to intermarriage, and intermarriage led rapidly to the blending of the two races.

If we compare a Finnish village in any stage of Russification with a Tartar village, of which the inhabitants are Mahometans, we cannot fail to be struck by the contrast. In the latter, though there may be many Russians, there is no blending of the two races. Between them religion has raised an impassable barrier. There are many villages in the eastern and north-eastern provinces of European Russia which have been for generations half Tartar and half Russian, and the amalgamation of the two nationalities has not yet begun. Near the one end stands the Christian church, and near the other stands the little *metchet*, or Mahometan house of prayer. The whole village forms one Commune, with one Village Assembly and one Village Elder; but, socially, it is composed of two distinct communities, each possessing its peculiar customs and peculiar mode of life. The Tartar may learn Russian, but he does not on that account become Russianised.

It must not, however, be supposed that the two races are imbued with fanatical hatred towards each other. On the contrary, they live in perfect good-fellowship, elect as Village Elder sometimes a Russian and sometimes a Tartar, and discuss the Communal affairs in the Village Assembly without reference to religious matters. I know one village where the good-fellowship went even a step farther: the Christians determined to repair their church, and the Mahometans helped them to transport wood for the purpose! All this tends to show that under a tolerably good Government, which does not favour one race at the expense of the other, Mahometan Tartars and Christian Slavs can live peaceably together.

The absence of fanaticism and of that proselytising zeal which is one of the most prolific sources of religious hatred,

is to be explained by the peculiar religious conceptions of these peasants. In their minds religion and nationality are so closely allied as to be almost identical. The Russian is, as it were, by nature a Christian, and the Tartar a Mahometan; and it never occurs to anyone in these villages to disturb the appointed order of nature. On this subject I had once an interesting conversation with a Russian peasant who had been for some time living among Tartars. In reply to my question as to what kind of people the Tartars were, he replied laconically, "Nitchevó"—that is to say, "Nothing in particular"; and on being pressed for a more definite expression of opinion, he admitted that they were very good people indeed.

"And what kind of faith have they?" I continued.

"A good enough faith," was the prompt reply.

"Is it better than the faith of the Molokánye?" The Molokánye are Russian sectarians—closely resembling Scotch Presbyterians—of whom I shall have more to say in the sequel.

"Of course it is better than the Molokán faith."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, endeavouring to conceal my astonishment at this strange judgment. "Are the Molokánye, then, very bad people?"

"Not at all. The Molokánye are good and honest."

"Why, then, do you think their faith is so much worse than that of the Mahometans?"

"How shall I tell you?" The peasant here paused as if to collect his thoughts, and then proceeded slowly, "The Tartars, you see, received their faith from God as they received the colour of their skins, but the Molokánye are Russians, who have invented a faith out of their own heads!"

This singular answer scarcely requires a commentary. As it would be absurd to try to make Tartars change the colour of their skins, so it would be absurd to try to make them change their religion. Besides this, such an attempt would be an unjustifiable interference with the designs of Providence, for, in the peasant's opinion, God gave Mahometanism to the Tartars just as he gave the Orthodox faith to the Russians.

The ecclesiastical authorities do not formally adopt this strange theory, but they generally act in accordance with it. There is little official propaganda among the Mahometan subjects of the Tsar, and it is well that it is so, for an energetic propaganda would lead merely to the stirring up of any latent hostility which may exist deep down in the nature of the two races, and it would not make any real converts. The Tartars cannot unconsciously imbibe Christianity as the Finns have done. Their religion is not a rude, simple paganism without theology in the scholastic sense of the term, but a monotheism as exclusive as Christianity itself. Enter into conversation with an intelligent man who has no higher religious belief than a rude sort of paganism, and you may, if you know him well and make a judicious use of your knowledge, easily interest him in the touching story of Christ's life and teaching. And in these unsophisticated natures there is but one step from interest and sympathy to conversion.

Try the same method with a Mussulman, and you will soon find that all your efforts are fruitless. He has already a theology and a prophet of his own, and sees no reason why he should exchange them for those which you have to offer. Perhaps he will show you more or less openly that he pities your ignorance, and wonders that you have not been able to *advance* from Christianity to Mahometanism. In his opinion—I am supposing that he is a man of education—Moses and Christ were great prophets in their day, and consequently he is accustomed to respect their memory; but he is profoundly convinced that, however appropriate they were for their own times, they have been entirely superseded by Mahomet, precisely as we believe that Judaism was superseded by Christianity. Proud of his superior knowledge, he regards you as a benighted polytheist, and may perhaps tell you that the Orthodox Christians with whom he comes in contact have three Gods and a host of lesser deities called saints, that they pray to idols called Icons, and that they keep their holy days by getting drunk. In vain you endeavour to explain to him that saints and Icons are not essential parts of Christianity, and that habits of intoxication have no religious significance. On these points

he may make concessions to you, but the doctrine of the Trinity remains for him a fatal stumbling-block. "You Christians," he will say, "once had a great prophet called Iisous, who is mentioned with respect in the Koran, but you falsified your sacred writings and took to worshipping him, and now you declare that he is the equal of Allah. Far from us be such blasphemy! There is but one God, and Mahomet is His prophet."

A worthy Christian missionary, who had laboured long and zealously among a Mussulman population, once called me sharply to account for having expressed the opinion that Mahometans are very rarely converted to Christianity. When I brought him down from the region of vague general statements and insisted on knowing how many cases he had met with in his own personal experience during sixteen years of missionary work, he was constrained to admit that he had known only one; and when I pressed him farther as to the disinterested sincerity of the convert in question, his reply was not altogether satisfactory!

The policy of religious non-intervention has not always been practised by the Government. Soon after the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan, in the sixteenth century, the Tsars of Muscovy attempted to convert their new subjects from Mahometanism to Christianity. The means employed were partly spiritual and partly administrative, but the police officers seem to have played a more important part than the clergy. In this way a certain number of Tartars were baptised; but the authorities were obliged to admit that the new converts "shamelessly retain many horrid Tartar customs, and neither hold nor know the Christian faith." When spiritual exhortations failed, the Government ordered its officials to "pacify, imprison, put in irons, and thereby *unteach* and frighten from the Tartar faith those who, though baptised, do not obey the admonitions of the Metropolitan." These energetic measures proved as ineffectual as the spiritual exhortations; and Catherine II. adopted a new method, highly characteristic of her system of administration. The new converts—who, it must be remembered, were unable to read or write—were ordered by Imperial ukaz to sign a written promise to the effect that "they would

completely forsake their infidel errors, and, avoiding all intercourse with unbelievers, would hold firmly and unwaveringly the Christian faith and its dogmas"*—of which latter, we may add, they had not the slightest knowledge. The childlike faith in the magical efficacy of stamped paper here displayed was not justified. The so-called "baptised Tartars" are at the present time as far from being Christians as they were in the sixteenth century. Until quite recently they could not openly profess Mahometanism, because men once formally admitted into the National Church could not leave it without exposing themselves to the severe pains and penalties of the criminal code, but they strongly objected to be Christianised.

On this subject I have found a remarkable admission in a semi-official article, published in 1872.† "It is a fact worthy of attention," says the writer, "that a long series of evident apostasies coincides with the beginning of measures to confirm the converts in the Christian faith. There must be, therefore, some collateral cause producing those cases of apostasy precisely at the moment when the contrary might be expected." There is a delightful *naïveté* in this way of stating the fact. The mysterious cause vaguely indicated is not difficult to find. So long as the Government demanded merely that the supposed converts should be inscribed as Christians in the official registers, there was no official apostasy; but as soon as active measures began to be taken "to confirm the converts," a spirit of hostility and fanaticism appeared among the Mussulman population, and made those who were inscribed as Christians resist the propaganda.

It may safely be said that Christians are impervious to Islam, and genuine Mussulmans impervious to Christianity; but between the two there are certain tribes, or fractions of tribes, which present a promising field for missionary enterprise. In this field the Tartars show much more zeal than the Russians, and possess certain advantages over their rivals. The tribes of North-eastern Russia learn Tartar much more easily than Russian, and their geographical

* "Ukaz Kazanskoi dukhovnoi Konsistorii." Anno 1778.

† "Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshtcheniya." June, 1872.

position and modes of life bring them in contact with Russians much less than with Tartars. The consequence is that whole villages of Tcheremiss and Votiáks, officially inscribed as belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church, have openly declared themselves Mahometans; and some of the more remarkable conversions have been commemorated by popular songs, which are sung by young and old. Against this propaganda the Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities do little or nothing. Until 1903 the criminal code contained severe enactments against those who fell away from the Orthodox Church, and still more against those who produced apostasy,* but the enactments were rarely put in force. The parish priest paid attention to apostasy only in so far as it diminished his annual revenues, and this could be easily avoided by the apostates paying a small yearly sum. When this precaution was taken, whole villages might be converted to Islam without the higher ecclesiastical authorities knowing anything of the matter.

Whether the barrier that separates Christians and Mussulmans in Russia, as elsewhere, will ever be broken down by education, I do not know; but I may remark that hitherto the spread of education among the Tartars has tended rather to imbue them with fanaticism. If we remember that theological education always produces intolerance, and that Tartar education is almost exclusively theological, we shall not be surprised to find that a Tartar's religious fanaticism is generally in direct proportion to the amount of his intellectual culture. The unlettered Tartar, unspoiled by learning falsely so called, and knowing merely enough of his religion to perform the customary ordinances prescribed by the Prophet, is peaceable, kindly, and hospitable towards all men; but the learned Tartar, who has been taught that the Christian is a *kiafir* (infidel) and a *müshrik* (polytheist), odious in the sight of Allah, and already condemned to eternal punishment, is as intolerant and fanatical as the most bigoted Roman Catholic or Calvinist. Such fanatics

* A person convicted of converting a Christian to Islam was sentenced, according to the criminal code (§ 184), to the loss of all civil rights, and to imprisonment with hard labour for a term varying from eight to ten years.

are occasionally to be met with in the eastern provinces, but they are few in number, and have little influence on the masses. From my own experience I can testify that during the whole course of my wanderings I have nowhere received more kindness and hospitality than among the uneducated Mussulman Bashkirs. Even here, however, Islam opposes a strong barrier to Russification.

Though no such barrier existed among the pagan Finnish tribes, the work of Russification among them is still, as I have already mentioned, far from complete. Not only whole villages, but even many entire districts, are still very little affected by Russian influence. This is to be explained partly by geographical conditions. In regions which have a poor soil, and are intersected by no navigable river, there are few or no Russian settlers, and consequently the Finns have there preserved intact their language and customs; whilst in those districts which present more inducements to colonisation, the Russian population is more numerous, and the Finns less conservative. It must, however, be admitted that geographical conditions do not completely explain the facts. The various tribes, even when placed in the same conditions, are not equally susceptible to foreign influence. The Mordvá, for instance, are infinitely less conservative than the Tchuvásh. This I have often noticed, and my impression has been confirmed by men who have had more opportunities of observation. For the present we must attribute this to some occult ethnological peculiarity, but future investigations may some day supply a more satisfactory explanation. Already I have obtained some facts which appear to throw light on the subject. The Tchuvásh have certain customs which seem to indicate that they were formerly, if not avowed Mahometans, at least under the influence of Islam, whilst we have no reason to suppose that the Mordvá ever passed through that school.

The absence of religious fanaticism greatly facilitated Russian colonisation in these northern regions, and the essentially peaceful disposition of the Russian peasantry tended in the same direction. The Russian peasant is admirably fitted for the work of peaceful agricultural coloni-

sation. Among uncivilised tribes he is good-natured, long-suffering, conciliatory, capable of bearing extreme hardships, and endowed with a marvellous power of adapting himself to circumstances. The haughty consciousness of personal and national superiority habitually displayed by Englishmen of all ranks when they are brought in contact with races which they look upon as lower in the scale of humanity than themselves, is entirely foreign to his character. He has no desire to rule, and no wish to make the natives hewers of wood and drawers of water. All he desires is a few acres of land, which he and his family can cultivate; and so long as he is allowed to enjoy these, he is not likely to molest his neighbours. Had the colonists of the Finnish country been men of Anglo-Saxon race, they would in all probability have taken possession of the land and reduced the natives to the condition of agricultural labourers. The Russian colonists have contented themselves with a humbler and less aggressive mode of action; they have settled peaceably among the native population, and are rapidly becoming blended with it. In many districts the so-called Russians have perhaps more Finnish than Slavonic blood in their veins.

But what has all this to do, it may be asked, with the aforementioned *Völkerwanderung*, or migration of peoples, during the Dark Ages? More than may at first sight appear. Some of the so-called migrations were, I suspect, not at all migrations in the ordinary sense of the term, but rather gradual changes, such as those which have taken place, and are still taking place, in Northern Russia. A thousand years ago, what is now known as the province of Yaroslavl was inhabited by Finns, and now it is occupied by men who are commonly regarded as pure Slavs. But it would be an utter mistake to suppose that the Finns of this district migrated to those more distant regions where they are now to be found. In reality they formerly occupied, as I have said, the whole of Northern Russia, and in the province of Yaroslavl they have been transformed by Slav infiltration. In Central Europe the Slavs may be said in a certain sense to have retreated, for in former times they occupied the whole of Northern Germany as far west as the Elbe. But what does

the word "retreat" mean in this case? It means probably that the Slavs were gradually Teutonised, and then absorbed by the Teutonic race. Some tribes, it is true, swept over a part of Europe in genuine nomadic fashion, and endeavoured perhaps to expel or exterminate the actual possessors of the soil. This kind of migration may likewise be studied in Russia. But I must leave the subject till I come to speak of the southern provinces.

CHAPTER XI

LORD NOVGOROD THE GREAT

COUNTRY life in Russia is pleasant enough in summer or in winter, but between summer and winter there is an intermediate period of several weeks, when the rain and mud transform a country house into something very like a prison. To escape this durance vile I determined in the month of October to leave Ivánovka, and chose as my headquarters for the next few months the town of Novgorod—the old town of that name, not to be confounded with Nizhni Novgorod, i.e. Lower Novgorod, on the Volga, where the great annual fair is held.

For this choice there were several reasons. I did not wish to go to St. Petersburg or Moscow, because I foresaw that in either of those cities my studies would certainly be interrupted. In a quiet, sleepy provincial town I should have much more chance of coming in contact with people who could not speak fluently any West-European languages, and much better opportunities for studying native life and local administration. Of the provincial capitals, Novgorod was the nearest, and more interesting than most of its rivals; for it has had a curious history, much older than that of St. Petersburg or even of Moscow, and some traces of its former greatness are still visible. Though now a town of third-rate importance—a mere shadow of its former self—it still contains about 27,000 inhabitants, and is the administrative centre of a large province.

About eighty miles from St. Petersburg the Moscow railway crosses the Volkhov, a rapid, muddy river which connects Lake Ilmen with Lake Ladoga. At the point of intersection I got on board a small steamer and sailed up stream towards Lake Ilmen for about fifty miles.* The

* The journey would now be made by rail, but the branch line which runs near the bank of the river had not been constructed at that time.

journey was tedious, for the country is flat and monotonous, and the steamer, though it puffed and snorted inordinately, did not make more than nine knots. Towards sunset Novgorod appeared on the horizon. Seen thus at a distance in the soft twilight, it seemed decidedly picturesque. On the east bank lay the greater part of the town, the sky line of which was agreeably broken by the green roofs and pear-shaped cupolas of many churches. On the opposite bank rose the Kremlin. Spanning the river was a long, venerable stone bridge, half hidden by a temporary wooden one, which was doing duty for the older structure while the latter was being repaired. A cynical fellow-passenger assured me that the temporary structure was destined to become permanent because it yielded a comfortable revenue to certain officials, but this sinister prediction has not been fulfilled.

That part of Novgorod which lies on the eastern bank of the river, and in which I took up my abode for several months, contains nothing that is worthy of special attention. As is the case in most Russian towns, the streets are straight, wide, and ill-paved, and all run parallel or at right angles to each other. At the end of the bridge is a spacious market-place, flanked on one side by the Town-house. Near the other side stand the houses of the Governor and of the chief military authority of the district. The only other buildings of note are the numerous churches, which are mostly small, and offer nothing that is likely to interest the student of architecture. Altogether this part of the town is unquestionably commonplace. The learned archæologist may detect in it some traces of the distant past, but the ordinary traveller will find little to arrest his attention.

If now we cross over to the west bank of the river, we are at once confronted by something which very few Russian towns possess—a kremlin, or citadel. This is a large and slightly elevated enclosure, surrounded by high brick walls, and in part by the remains of a moat. Before the days of heavy artillery these walls must have presented a formidable barrier to any besieging force, but they have long ceased to have any military significance, and are now nothing more than an historical monument. Passing through the gateway

which faces the bridge, we find ourselves in a large open space. To the right stands the cathedral—a small, much-venerated church, which can make no pretensions to architectural beauty—and an irregular group of buildings containing the consistory and the residence of the Archbishop. To the left is a long symmetrical range of buildings containing the Government offices and the law courts. Midway between this and the cathedral, in the centre of the great open space, stands a colossal monument, composed of a massive circular stone pedestal and an enormous globe, on and around which cluster a number of emblematic and historical figures. This curious monument, which has at least the merit of being original in design, was erected in 1862, in commemoration of Russia's thousandth birthday, and is supposed to represent the history of Russia in general and of Novgorod in particular during the last thousand years. It was placed here because Novgorod is the oldest of Russian towns, and because somewhere in the surrounding country occurred the incident which is commonly recognised as the foundation of the Russian Empire. The incident in question is thus described in the oldest chronicle:—

"At that time, as the southern Slavonians paid tribute to the Kozars, so the Novgorodian Slavonians suffered from the attacks of the Variags. For some time the Variags extracted tribute from the Novgorodian Slavonians and the neighbouring Finns; then the conquered tribes, by uniting their forces, drove out the foreigners. But among the Slavonians arose strong internal dissensions; the clans rose against each other. Then, for the creation of order and safety, they resolved to call in princes from a foreign land. In the year 862 Slavonic legates went away beyond the sea to the Variag tribe called Rūs, and said, 'Our land is great and fruitful, but there is no order in it; come and reign and rule over us.' Three brothers accepted the invitation, and appeared with their armed followers. The eldest of these, Rurik, settled in Novgorod; the second, Sineus, at Byelo-ózero; and the third, Truvor, in Isborsk. From them our land is called Rūs. After two years the brothers of Rurik died. He alone began to rule over the Novgorod district, and confided to his men the administration of the principal towns."

This simple legend has given rise to a vast amount of learned controversy, and historical investigators have fought valiantly with each other over the important question, Who were those armed men of Rūs? For a long time the commonly received opinion was that they were Normans from Scandinavia. The Slavophils accepted the legend literally in this sense, and constructed upon it an ingenious theory of Russian history. The nations of the West, they said, were conquered by invaders, who seized the country and created the feudal system for their own benefit; hence the history of Western Europe is a long tale of bloody struggles between conquerors and conquered, and at the present day the old enmity still lives in the political rivalry of the different social classes. The Russo-Slavonians, on the contrary, were not conquered, but voluntarily invited a foreign prince to come and rule over them; hence the whole social and political development of Russia has been essentially peaceful, and the Russian people know nothing of social castes or feudalism. Though this theory afforded some nourishment for patriotic self-satisfaction, it displeased extreme patriots, who did not like the idea that order was first established in their country by men of Teutonic race. These preferred to adopt the theory that Rurik and his companions were Slavonians from the shores of the Baltic.

Though I devoted to the study of this question more time and labour than perhaps the subject deserved, I have no intention of inviting the reader to follow me through the tedious controversy. Suffice it to say that, after careful consideration, and with all due deference to recent historians, I am inclined to adopt the old theory, and to regard the Normans of Scandinavia as in a certain sense the founders of the Russian Empire. We know from other sources that during the ninth century there was a great exodus from Scandinavia. Greedy of booty, and fired with the spirit of adventure, the Northmen, in their light, open boats, swept along the coasts of Germany, France, Spain, Greece, and Asia Minor, pillaging the towns and villages near the sea, and entering into the heart of the country by means of the rivers. At first they were mere marauders, and showed everywhere such ferocity and cruelty that they came to be

regarded as something akin to plagues and famines, and the faithful added a new petition to the Litany, "From the wrath and malice of the Normans, O Lord, deliver us!" But towards the middle of the century the movement changed its character. The raids became military invasions, and the invaders sought to conquer the lands which they had formerly plundered, "ut acquirant sibi spoliando regna quibus possent vivere pace perpetua." The chiefs embraced Christianity, married the daughters or sisters of the reigning princes, and obtained the conquered territories as feudal grants. Thus arose Norman principalities in the Low Countries, in France, in Italy, and in Sicily; and the Northmen, rapidly blending with the native population, soon showed as much political talent as they had formerly shown reckless and destructive valour.

It would have been strange indeed if these adventurers, who succeeded in reaching Asia Minor and the coasts of North America, should have overlooked Russia, which lay, as it were, at their very doors. The Volkhov, flowing through Novgorod, formed part of a great water-way, which afforded almost uninterrupted water communication between the Baltic and the Black Sea; and we know that some time afterwards the Scandinavians used this route in their journeys to Constantinople. The change which the Scandinavian movement underwent elsewhere is clearly indicated by the Russian chronicles: first, the Variags came as collectors of tribute, and raised so much popular opposition that they were expelled, and then they came as rulers, and settled in the country. Whether they really came on invitation may be doubted, but that they adopted the language, religion, and customs of the native population does not militate against the assertion that they were Normans. On the contrary, we have here rather an additional confirmation, for elsewhere the Normans did likewise. In the North of France they adopted almost at once the French language and religion, and the son and successor of the famous Rollo was sometimes reproached with being more French than Norman.*

Though it is difficult to decide how far the legend is literally true, there can be no possible doubt that the event

* Strinnholm, "Die Vikingerzüge" (Hamburg, 1839), I., p. 135.

which it more or less accurately describes had an important influence on Russian history. From that time dates the rapid expansion of the Russo-Slavonians—a movement that is still going on at the present day. To the north, the east, and the south, new principalities were formed and governed by men who all claimed to be descendants of Rurik, and down to the end of the sixteenth century no Russian outside of this great family ever attempted to establish independent sovereignty.

For six centuries after the so-called invitation of Rurik, the city on the Volkhov had a strange, chequered history. Rapidly it conquered the neighbouring Finnish tribes, and grew into a powerful independent state, with a territory extending to the Gulf of Finland, and northwards to the White Sea. At the same time its commercial importance increased, and it became an outpost of the Hanseatic League. In this work the descendants of Rurik played an important part, but they were always kept in strict subordination to the popular will. Political freedom kept pace with commercial prosperity. What means Rurik employed for establishing and preserving order we know not, but the chronicles show that his successors in Novgorod possessed merely such authority as was freely granted them by the people. The supreme power resided, not in the prince, but in the assembly of the citizens called together in the market-place by the sound of the great bell. This assembly made laws for the prince as well as for the people, entered into alliances with foreign Powers, declared war, and concluded peace, imposed taxes, raised troops, and not only elected the magistrates, but also judged and deposed them when it thought fit. The prince was little more than the hired commander of the troops and the president of the judicial administration. When entering on his functions he had to take a solemn oath that he would faithfully observe the ancient laws and usages, and if he failed to fulfil his promise he was sure to be summarily deposed and expelled. The people had an old rhymed proverb, "Koli khud knyaz, tak v gryaz!" ("If the prince is bad, into the mud with him!"), and they habitually acted according to it. So unpleasant, indeed, was the task of ruling those sturdy, stiff-necked burghers, that some

princes refused to undertake it, and others, having tried it for a time, voluntarily laid down their authority and departed. But these frequent depositions and abdications—as many as thirty took place in the course of a single century—did not permanently disturb the existing order of things. The descendants of Rurik were numerous, and there were always plenty of candidates for the vacant post. The municipal republic continued to grow in strength and in riches, and during the thirteenth and fourteenth century it proudly styled itself "Lord Novgorod the Great" (*Gospodin Veliki Novgorod*).

"Then came a change, as all things human change." To the east arose the principality of Moscow—not an old, rich municipal republic, but a young, vigorous State, ruled by a line of crafty, energetic, ambitious, and unscrupulous princes of the Rurik stock, who were freeing the country from the Tartar yoke and gradually annexing by fair means and foul the neighbouring principalities to their own dominions. At the same time, and in a similar manner, the Lithuanian Princes to the westward united various small principalities, and formed a large independent State. Thus Novgorod found itself in a critical position. Under a strong Government it might have held its own against these rivals and successfully maintained its independence, but its strength was already undermined by internal dissensions. Political liberty had led to anarchy. Again and again on that great open space where the national monument now stands, and in the market-place on the other side of the river, scenes of disorder and bloodshed took place, and more than once on the bridge battles were fought by contending factions. Sometimes it was a contest between rival families, and sometimes a struggle between the municipal aristocracy, who sought to monopolise the political power, and the common people, who wished to have a large share in the administration. A State thus divided against itself could not long resist the aggressive tendencies of powerful neighbours. Artful diplomacy could but postpone the evil day, and it required no great political foresight to predict that sooner or later Novgorod must become Lithuanian or Muscovite. The great families inclined to Lithuania, but the popular party and the clergy, disliking

Roman Catholicism, looked to Moscow for assistance, and the Grand Princes of Muscovy ultimately won the prize.

The barbarous way in which the Grand Princes effected the annexation shows how thoroughly they had imbibed the spirit of Tartar statesmanship. Thousands of families were transported to Moscow, and Muscovite families put in their place; and when, in spite of this, the old spirit revived, Ivan the Terrible determined to apply the method of physical extermination, which he had found so effectual in breaking the power of his own nobles. Advancing with a large army, which met with no resistance, he devastated the country with fire and sword, and during a residence of five weeks in the town, he put the inhabitants to death with a ruthless ferocity which has perhaps never been surpassed even by Oriental despots. If those old walls could speak they would have many a horrible tale to tell. Enough has been preserved in the chronicles to give us some idea of this awful time. Monks and priests were subjected to the Tartar punishment called *pravezh,* which consisted in tying the victim to a stake, and flogging him daily until a certain sum of money was paid for his release. The merchants and officials were tortured with fire, and then thrown from the bridge with their wives and children into the river. Lest any of them should escape by swimming, boatfuls of soldiers despatched those who were not killed by the fall. At the present day there is a curious bubbling immediately below the bridge, which prevents the water from freezing in winter, and according to popular belief this is caused by the spirits of the terrible Tsar's victims. Of those who were murdered in the villages there is no record, but in the town alone no less than 60,000 human beings are said to have been butchered—an awful hecatomb on the altar of national unity and autocratic power!

This tragic scene, which occurred in 1570, closes the history of Novgorod as an independent State. Its real independence had long since ceased to exist, and now the last spark of the old spirit was extinguished. The Tsars could not suffer even a shadow of political independence to exist within their dominions.

In the old days, when many Hanseatic merchants annually visited the city, and when the market-place, the bridge, and the Kremlin were often the scene of violent political struggles, Novgorod must have been an interesting place to live in; but now its glory has departed, and in respect of social resources it is not even a first-rate provincial town. Kiev, Kharkov, and other towns which are situated at a greater distance from the capital, in districts fertile enough to induce the nobles to farm their own land, are in their way little semi-independent centres of civilisation. They contain a theatre, a library, two or three clubs, and large houses belonging to rich landed proprietors, who spend the summer on their estates and come into town for the winter months. These proprietors, together with the resident officials, form a numerous society, and during the winter, dinner-parties, balls, and other social gatherings are by no means infrequent. In Novgorod the society is much more limited. It does not, like Kiev, Kharkov, and Kazan, possess a university, and it contains no houses belonging to wealthy nobles. The few proprietors of the province who live on their estates, and are rich enough to spend part of the year in town, prefer St. Petersburg for their winter residence. The society, therefore, is composed exclusively of officials and of the officers who happen to be quartered in the town or the immediate vicinity.

Of all the people whose acquaintance I made at Novgorod, I can recall only two men who did not occupy some official position, civil or military. One of these was a retired doctor, who was attempting to farm on scientific principles, and who, I believe, soon afterwards gave up the attempt and migrated elsewhere. The other was a Polish Roman Catholic bishop, who had been compromised in the insurrection of 1863, and was condemned to live here under police supervision. This latter could scarcely be said to belong to the society of the place; though he sometimes appeared at the unceremonious weekly receptions given by the Governor, and was invariably treated by all present with marked respect, he could not but feel that he was in a false position, and he was rarely or never seen in other houses.

The official circle of a town like Novgorod is sure to con-

tain a good many people of average education and agreeable manners, but it is sure to be neither brilliant nor interesting. Though it is constantly undergoing a gradual renovation by the accepted system of frequently transferring officials from one locality to another, it preserves faithfully, in spite of the new blood which it thus receives, its essentially languid character. When a new official arrives he exchanges visits with all the notables, and for a few days he produces quite a sensation in the little community. If he appears at social gatherings he is much talked to, and if he does not appear he is much talked about. His former history is repeatedly narrated, and his various merits and defects assiduously discussed.

If he is married, and has brought his wife with him, the field of comment and discussion is very much enlarged. The first time that madame appears in society she is "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes." Her features, her complexion, her hair, her dress, and her jewellery are carefully noted and criticised. Perhaps she has brought with her, from the capital or from abroad, some dresses of the newest fashion. As soon as this is discovered she at once becomes an object of special curiosity to the ladies, and of envious jealousy to those who regard as a personal grievance the presence of a toilette finer or more fashionable than their own. Her demeanour, too, is very carefully observed. If she is friendly and affable in manner, she is patronised; if she is distant and reserved, she is condemned as proud and pretentious. In either case she is pretty sure to form a close intimacy with some one of the older female residents, and for a few weeks the two ladies are inseparable, till some incautious word or act disturbs the new-born friendship, and the devoted friends become bitter enemies. Voluntarily or involuntarily the husbands get mixed up in the quarrel. Highly undesirable qualities are discovered in the characters of all parties concerned, and are made the subject of unfriendly comment. Then the feud subsides, and some new feud of a similar kind comes to occupy the public attention. Mrs. A. wonders how her friends Mr. and Mrs. B. can afford to lose considerable sums every evening at cards, and suspects that they are getting into debt or starving themselves and their

children; in her humble opinion they would do well to give fewer supper parties, and to refrain from poisoning their guests. The bosom friend to whom this is related retails it directly or indirectly to Mrs. B., and Mrs. B. naturally retaliates. Here is a new quarrel, which for some time affords material for conversation.

When there is no quarrel, there is sure to be a bit of scandal afloat. Though Russian provincial society is not at all prudish, and leans rather to the side of extreme leniency, it cannot entirely overlook *les convenances*. Madame C. has always a large number of male admirers, and to this there can be no reasonable objection so long as her husband does not complain, but really she parades her preference for Mr. X. at balls and parties a little too conspicuously. Then there is Madame D., with the big dreamy eyes. How can she remain in the place after her husband was killed in a duel by a brother officer? Ostensibly the cause of the quarrel was a trifling incident at the card-table, but everyone knows that in reality she was the cause of the deadly encounter. And so on, and so on. In the absence of graver interests society naturally bestows inordinate attention on the private affairs of its members; and quarrelling, backbiting, and scandalmongery help indolent people to kill the time that hangs heavily on their hands.

Potent as these instruments are, they are not sufficient to kill all the leisure hours. In the forenoons the gentlemen are occupied with their official duties, whilst the ladies go out shopping or pay visits, and devote any time that remains to their household duties and their children; but the day's work is over about four o'clock, and the long evening remains to be filled up. The siesta may dispose of an hour or an hour and a half, but about seven o'clock some definite occupation has to be found. As it is impossible to devote the whole evening to discussing the ordinary news of the day, recourse is almost invariably had to card-playing, which is indulged in to an extent that we had no conception of in England until Bridge was imported. Hour after hour the Russians of both sexes will sit in a hot room, filled with a constantly renewed cloud of tobacco smoke—in the production of which most of the ladies take part—and silently play

"Préference" or "Yarolash," a game resembling whist.* Those who for some reason are obliged to be alone can amuse themselves with "Patience," in which no partner is required. In the other games the stakes are commonly very small, but the sittings are often continued so long that a player may win or lose two or three pounds sterling. It is no unusual thing for gentlemen to play for eight or nine hours at a time. At the weekly club-dinners, before coffee had been served, nearly all present used to rush off impatiently to the card-room, and sit there placidly from five o'clock in the afternoon till one or two o'clock in the morning! When I asked my friends why they devoted so much time to this unprofitable occupation, they always gave me pretty much the same answer: "What are we to do? We have been reading or writing official papers all day, and in the evening we like to have a little relaxation. When we come together we have very little to talk about, for we have all read the daily papers and nothing more. The best thing we can do is to sit down at the card-table, where we can spend our time pleasantly, without the necessity of talking."

In addition to the daily papers, some people read the monthly periodicals—big, thick volumes, containing several serious articles on historical and social subjects, sections of one or two novels, satirical sketches, and a long review of home and foreign politics on the model of those in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Several of these periodicals are very ably conducted, and offer to their readers a large amount of valuable information; but I have noticed that the leaves of the more serious part often remain uncut. The translation of a sensation novel by the latest French or English favourite finds many more readers than an article by an historian or a political economist. As to books, they seem to be very little read, for during all the time I lived in Novgorod I never discovered a bookseller's shop, and when I required books I had to get them sent from St. Petersburg. The local administration, it is true, conceived the idea of forming a museum and circulating library, but in my time the project was never realised. Of all the magnificent projects that are

* Since the time of my residence in Novgorod, "Yarolash" has been replaced by Bridge.

formed in Russia, only a very small percentage come into existence, and these are too often very short-lived. The Russians have learned theoretically what are the wants of the most advanced civilisation, and are ever ready to rush into the grand schemes which their theoretical knowledge suggests; but very few of them really and permanently feel these wants, and consequently the institutions artificially formed to satisfy them very soon languish and die. In the provincial towns the shops for the sale of gastronomic delicacies spring up and flourish, whilst shops for the sale of intellectual food are rarely to be met with.

About the beginning of December the ordinary monotony of Novgorod life is a little relieved by the annual Provincial Assembly, which sits daily for two or three weeks and discusses the economic wants of the province.* During this time a good many landed proprietors, who habitually live on their estates or in St. Petersburg, collect in the town, and enliven a little the ordinary society. But as Christmas approaches the deputies disperse, and again the town becomes enshrouded in that "eternal stillness" (*vétchnaya tishiná*) which a native poet has declared to be the essential characteristic of Russian provincial life.

* Of these assemblies I shall have more to say when I come to describe the local self-government.

CHAPTER XII

THE TOWNS AND THE MERCANTILE CLASSES

THOSE who wish to enjoy the illusions produced by scene painting and stage decorations should never go behind the scenes. In like manner he who wishes to preserve the delusion that Russian provincial towns are picturesque should never enter them, but content himself with viewing them from a distance.

However imposing they may look when seen from the outside, they will be found on closer inspection, with very few exceptions, to be little more than villages in disguise. If they have not a positively rustic, they have at least a suburban, appearance. The streets are straight and wide, and are either miserably paved or not paved at all. *Trottoirs* are not considered indispensable. The houses are built of wood or brick, generally one-storied, and separated from each other by spacious yards. Many of them do not condescend to turn their façades to the street. The general impression produced is that the majority of the burghers have come from the country, and have brought their country houses with them. There are few or no shops with merchandise tastefully arranged in the window to tempt the passer-by. If you wish to make purchases you must go to the Gostinny Dvor,* or Bazaar, which consists of long symmetrical rows of low-roofed, dimly lighted stores, with a colonnade in front. This is the place where merchants most do congregate, but it presents nothing of that bustle and activity which we are accustomed to associate with commercial life. The shopkeepers stand at their doors or loiter about in the immediate vicinity waiting for customers. From the scarcity of these latter I should say that when sales are effected the profits must be enormous.

* These words mean literally the Guests' Court or Yard. The Gosti—a word which is etymologically the same as our "host" and "guest"—were originally the merchants who traded with other towns or other countries.

In the other parts of the town the air of solitude and languor is still more conspicuous. In the great square, or by the side of the promenade—if the town is fortunate enough to have one—cows or horses may be seen grazing tranquilly, without being at all conscious of the incongruity of their position. And, indeed, it would be strange if they had any such consciousness, for it does not exist in the minds either of the police or of the inhabitants. At night the streets may be lighted merely with a few oil-lamps, which do little more than render the darkness visible, so that cautious citizens returning home late often provide themselves with lanterns. As late as the 'sixties the learned historian, Pogódin, then a town councillor of Moscow, opposed the lighting of the city with gas on the ground that those who chose to go out at night should carry their lamps with them. The objection was over-ruled, and Moscow is now fairly well lit, but the provincial towns are still far from being on the same level. Some retain their old primitive arrangements, while others enjoy the luxury of electric lighting.

The scarcity of large towns in Russia is not less remarkable than their rustic appearance. According to the latest statistics the number of towns, officially so-called, is 1,321, but about three-fifths of them have under 5,000 inhabitants, only 104 have over 25,000, and only 19 over 100,000. These figures indicate plainly that the urban element of the population is relatively small, and it is declared by the statisticians to be only 14 per cent., as against 72 per cent. in Great Britain; but it is now increasing. When the first edition of this work was published, in 1877, European Russia in the narrower sense of the term—excluding Finland, the Baltic Provinces, Lithuania, Poland, and the Caucasus—had only eleven towns with a population of over 50,000, and now there are thirty-five: that is to say, the number of such towns has more than trebled. In the other portions of the country a similar increase has taken place. The towns which have become important industrial and commercial centres have naturally grown most rapidly. For example, in a period of twelve years (1885-97) the populations of Lodz, of Ekaterinoslav, of Baku, of Yaroslavl, and of Libau, more than doubled. In the five largest towns of the

Empire—St. Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Odessa and Lodz—the aggregate population has risen during the last twenty-five years from 2,423,000 to over 5,000,000. In ten other thriving towns, with populations varying from 50,000 to 282,000, the recent increase in the number of inhabitants has been almost equally rapid.

That Russia should have taken so long to assimilate herself in this respect to Western Europe is to be explained by the geographical and political conditions. Her population was not hemmed in by natural or artificial frontiers strong enough to restrain their expansive tendencies. To the north, the east, and the south-east there was a boundless expanse of fertile, uncultivated land, offering a tempting field for emigration; and the peasantry have ever shown themselves ready to take advantage of their opportunities. Instead of improving their primitive system of agriculture, which requires an enormous area and rapidly exhausts the soil, they have always found it easier and more profitable to emigrate and take possession of the virgin land beyond. Thus the territory—sometimes with the aid of, and sometimes in spite of, the Government—has constantly expanded, and has already reached the Polar Ocean, the Pacific, and the northern offshoots of the Himalayas. The little district around the sources of the Dnieper has grown into a mighty empire, comprising one-seventh of the land surface of the globe. Prolific as the Russian race is, its powers of reproduction could not keep pace with its territorial expansion, and consequently the country is still very thinly peopled. According to the most recent statistics (1910), in the whole empire there are about 164 millions of inhabitants, and the average density of population is only about nineteen to the English square mile. Even European Russia, which is, of course, much more densely populated than the Asiatic provinces, cannot show, as a whole, more than 63 to the English square mile, whereas the United Kingdom has about 374. A people that has such an abundance of land, and can support itself by agriculture, is naturally not disposed to devote itself to manufacturing industry and congregate largely in cities.

For many generations there were other powerful influences

working in the same direction. Of these the most important was serfage, which was not abolished till 1861. That institution, and the administrative system of which it formed an essential part, tended to prevent the growth of the towns by hemming the natural movements of the population. Peasants, for example, who learned trades, and who ought to have drifted naturally into the burgher class, were mostly retained by the master on his estate, where artisans of all sorts were daily wanted, and the few who were sent to seek work in the towns were not allowed to settle there permanently.

Thus the insignificance of the Russian towns is to be attributed mainly to two causes. The abundance of land tended to prevent the development of industry, and the little industry which did exist was prevented by serfage from collecting in the towns. But this explanation is evidently incomplete. The same causes existed during the Middle Ages in Central Europe, and yet, in spite of them, flourishing cities grew up and played an important part in the social and political history of Germany. In these cities collected traders and artisans, forming a distinct social class, distinguished from the nobles on the one hand, and the surrounding peasantry on the other, by peculiar occupations, peculiar aims, peculiar intellectual physiognomy, and peculiar moral conceptions. Why did these important towns and this burgher class not likewise come into existence in Russia, in spite of the two preventive causes above mentioned?

To discuss this question fully it would be necessary to enter into certain debated points of mediæval history. All I can do here is to indicate what seems to me the true explanation.

In Central Europe, all through the Middle Ages, a perpetual struggle went on between the various political factors of which society was composed, and the important towns were in a certain sense the products of this struggle. They were preserved and fostered by the mutual rivalry of the Sovereign, the feudal nobility, and the Church; and those who desired to live by trade or industry settled in them in order to enjoy the protection and immunities which they afforded. In Russia there was never any political struggle

of this kind. As soon as the Grand Princes of Moscow, in the sixteenth century, threw off the yoke of the Tartars, and made themselves Tsars of all Russia, their power was irresistible and uncontested. Complete masters of the situation, they organised their country as they thought fit. At first their policy was favourable to the development of the towns. Perceiving that the mercantile and industrial classes might be made a rich source of revenue, they separated them from the peasantry, gave them the exclusive right of trading, prevented the other classes from competing with them, and freed them from the authority of the landed proprietors. Had they carried out this policy in a cautious, rational way, they might have created a rich burgher class; but they acted with true Oriental short-sightedness, and defeated their own purpose, by imposing inordinately heavy taxes, and treating the urban population as their serfs. The richer merchants were forced to serve as custom-house officers—often at a great distance from their domiciles*—and artisans were yearly summoned to Moscow to do work for the Tsars without remuneration.

Besides this, the system of taxation was radically defective and the members of the local administration, who received no pay and were practically free from control, were merciless in their exactions. In a word, the Tsars used their power so stupidly and so recklessly that the industrial and trading population, instead of fleeing to the towns to secure protection, fled from them to escape oppression. At length this emigration from the towns assumed such dimensions that it was found necessary to prevent it by administrative and legislative measures; and the urban population were legally fixed in the towns as the rural population were fixed to the soil. Those who fled were brought back as runaways, and those who attempted flight a second time were ordered to be flogged and transported to Siberia.†

With the eighteenth century began a new era in the history of the towns and of the urban population. Peter the Great observed, during his travels in Western Europe, that

* Merchants from Yaroslavl, for instance, were sent to Astrakhan to collect the custom-dues.

† *See* the "Ulozhenié" (i.e. the laws of Alexis, father of Peter the Great), cap. xix., § 13.

national wealth and prosperity reposed chiefly on the enterprising, educated middle classes, and he attributed the poverty of his own country to the absence of this burgher element. Might not such a class be created in Russia? Peter unhesitatingly assumed that it might, and set himself at once to create it in a simple, straightforward way. Foreign artisans were imported into his dominions, and foreign merchants were invited to trade with his subjects; young Russians were sent abroad to learn the useful arts; efforts were made to disseminate practical knowledge by the translation of foreign books and the foundation of schools; all kinds of trade were encouraged, and various industrial enterprises were organised. At the same time the administration of the towns was thoroughly reorganised after the model of the ancient free towns of Germany. In place of the old organisation, which was a slightly modified form of the rural Commune, they received German municipal institutions, with burgomasters, town councils, courts of justice, guilds for the merchants, trade corporations (*tsekhi*) for the artisans, and an endless list of instructions regarding the development of trade and industry, the building of hospitals, sanitary precautions, the founding of schools, the dispensation of justice, the organisation of the police, and similar matters.

Catherine II. followed in the same track. If she did less for trade and industry, she did more in the way of legislating and writing grandiloquent manifestoes. In the course of her historical studies she had learned, as she proclaims in one of her manifestoes, that "from remotest antiquity we everywhere find the memory of town-builders elevated to the same level as the memory of legislators, and we see that heroes, famous for their victories, hoped by town-building to give immortality to their names." As the securing of immortality for her own name was her chief aim in life, she acted in accordance with historical precedent, and created 216 towns in the short space of twenty-three years. This seems a great work, but it did not satisfy her ambition. She was not only a student of history, but was at the same time a warm admirer of the fashionable political philosophy of her time. That philosophy paid much attention to the *tiers-état*, which was then acquiring in France great political importance, and

Catherine thought that, as she had created a noblesse on the French model, she might also create a *bourgeoisie*. For this purpose she modified the municipal organisation created by her great predecessor, and granted to all the towns an Imperial Charter. This charter remained without essential modification until the publication of the new Municipality Law in 1870.

The efforts of the Government to create a rich, intelligent *tiers-état* were not attended with much success. Their influence was always more apparent in official documents than in real life. The great mass of the population remained serfs, fixed to the soil, whilst the nobles—that is to say, all who possessed a little education—were required for the military and civil services. Those who were sent abroad to learn the useful arts learned little, and made little use of the knowledge which they acquired. On their return to their native country they very soon fell victims to the soporific influence of the surrounding social atmosphere. The "town building" had as little practical result. It was an easy matter to create any number of towns in the official sense of the term. To transform a village into a town, it was necessary merely to prepare an *izbá*, or log-house, for the district court, another for the police office, a third for the prison, and so on. On an appointed day the Governor of the province arrived in the village, collected the officials appointed to serve in the newly constructed or newly arranged log-houses, ordered a simple religious ceremony to be performed by the priest, caused a formal act to be drawn up, and then declared the town to be "opened." All this required very little creative effort; to create a spirit of commercial and industrial enterprise among the population was a more difficult matter, and could not be effected by Imperial ukaz.

To animate the newly imported municipal institutions, which had no root in the traditions and habits of the people, was a task of equal difficulty. In the West these institutions had been slowly devised in the course of centuries to meet real, keenly felt, practical wants. In Russia they were adopted for the purpose of creating those wants which were not yet felt. Let the reader imagine our Board of Trade supplying the masters of fishing smacks with accurate charts,

learned treatises on navigation, and detailed instructions for the proper ventilation of ships' cabins, and he will have some idea of the effect which Peter's legislation had upon the towns. The office bearers, elected against their will, were hopelessly bewildered by the complicated procedure, and were incapable of understanding the numerous ukazes, which prescribed to them their multifarious duties, and threatened the most merciless punishments for sins of omission and commission. Soon, however, it was discovered that the threats were not nearly so dreadful as they seemed; and accordingly those municipal authorities who were to protect and enlighten the burghers "forgot the fear of God and the Tsar," and extorted so unblushingly that it was found necessary to place them under the control of Government officials.

The chief practical result of the efforts made by Peter and Catherine to create a *bourgeoisie* was that the inhabitants of the towns were more systematically arranged in categories for the purpose of taxation, and that the taxes were increased. All those parts of the new administration which had no direct relation to the fiscal interests of the Government had very little vitality in them. The whole system had been arbitrarily imposed on the people, and had as motor only the Imperial will. Had that motor power been withdrawn and the burghers left to regulate their own municipal affairs, the system would immediately have collapsed. *Rathhaus,* burgomasters, guilds, aldermen, and all the other lifeless shadows which had been called into existence by Imperial ukaz, would instantly have vanished into space. In this fact we have one of the characteristic traits of Russian historical development compared with that of Western Europe. In the West, monarchy had to struggle with municipal institutions to prevent them from becoming too powerful; in Russia, it had to struggle with them to prevent them from committing suicide or dying of inanition.

According to Catherine's legislation, which remained in force until 1870, and still exists in some of its main features, the towns were divided into three categories: (1) government towns (*gubernskiye gorodá*)—that is to say, the chief towns of provinces or "governments" (*gubernii*)—in which are concentrated the various organs of provincial administration;

(2) district towns (*uyezdniye gorodá*), in which resides the administration of the districts (*uyezdi*) into which the provinces are divided; and (3) supernumerary towns (*zashtatniye gorodá*), which have no particular significance in the territorial administration.

In all these the municipal organisation is the same. Leaving out of consideration those persons who happen to reside in the towns but in reality belong to the noblesse, the clergy, or the lower ranks of officials, we may say that the town population is composed of three groups: the merchants (*kuptsi*), the burghers in the narrower sense of the term (*meshtchanye*), and the artisans (*tsekhoviye*). These categories are not hereditary castes, like the nobles, the clergy, and the peasantry. A noble may become a merchant, or a man may be one year a burgher, the next year an artisan, and the third year a merchant, if he changes his occupation and pays the necessary dues. But the categories form, for the time being, distinct corporations, each possessing a peculiar organisation and peculiar privileges and obligations.

Of these three groups, the first in the scale of dignity is that of the merchants. It is chiefly recruited from the burghers and the peasantry. Anyone who wishes to engage in commerce inscribes himself in one of the three guilds, according to the amount of his capital and the nature of the operations in which he wishes to embark, and as soon as he has paid the required dues he becomes officially a merchant. As soon as he ceases to pay these dues he ceases to be a merchant in the legal sense of the term, and returns to the class to which he formerly belonged. There are some families whose members have belonged to the merchant class for several generations, and the law speaks about a certain "velvet-book" (*bárkhatnaya kniga*) in which their names should be inscribed, but in reality they do not form a distinct category, and they descend at once from their privileged position as soon as they cease to pay the annual guild dues.

The artisans form the connecting link between the town population and the peasantry, for peasants often enrol themselves in the trades corporations or *tsekhi*, without severing temporarily their connection with the rural Communes to which they belong. Each trade or handicraft constitutes a

tsekh, at the head of which stands an elder and two assistants, elected by the members; and all the *tsekhi* together form a corporation under an elected head (*Reméslenny Golová*), assisted by a council composed of the elders of the various *tsekhi.* It is the duty of this council and its president to regulate all matters connected with the *tsekhi,* and to see that the multifarious regulations regarding masters, journeymen, and apprentices are duly observed. So much for the theory; in reality, the *tsekhi* have been practically abolished by recent legislation.

The nondescript class, composed of those who are inscribed as permanent inhabitants of the towns but who do not belong to any guild or *tsekh,* constitutes what is called the burghers in the narrower sense of the term. Like the other two categories, they form a separate corporation with an elder and an administrative bureau.

Such is in theory the organisation of the urban population; in reality it differs in different localities, and everywhere in recent years it has been slowly divesting itself of mediæval forms and adapting itself to modern requirements.

In 1870 the entire municipal administration was reorganised, and the Town Council (*Gorodskáya Dúma*), which formed under the previous system the connecting link between the old-fashioned corporations, and was composed exclusively of members of these bodies, became a genuine representative body composed of householders, irrespective of the social class to which they might belong. A noble, provided he was a house proprietor, could become Town Councillor or Mayor, and in this way a certain amount of vitality and a progressive spirit were infused into the municipal administration. As a consequence of this change the schools, hospitals, and other benevolent institutions were much improved, the streets were kept cleaner and somewhat better paved, and for a time it seemed as if the towns in Russia might gradually rise to the level of those of Western Europe. But the charm of novelty, which so often works wonders in Russia, soon wore off. After a few years of strenuous effort the best citizens no longer came forward as candidates, and the office bearers selected no longer displayed so much zeal and intelligence in the discharge of their duties.

In these circumstances the Government felt called upon again to intervene. By a decree dated 11th June, 1892, it introduced a new series of reforms, by which the municipal self-government was placed more under the direction and control of the centralised bureaucracy, and the attendance of the Town Councillors at the periodical meetings was declared to be obligatory, recalcitrant members being threatened with reprimands and fines.

This last fact speaks volumes for the low vitality of the institutions and the prevalent popular apathy with regard to municipal affairs. Nor was the unsatisfactory state of things much improved by the new reforms; on the contrary, the increased interference of the regular officials tended rather to weaken the vitality of the urban self-government, and the so-called reform was pretty generally condemned as a needlessly reactionary measure. We have here, in fact, a case of what has often occurred in the administrative history of the Russian Empire since the time of Peter the Great, and to which I shall again have occasion to refer. The central authority, finding itself incompetent to do all that is required of it, and wishing to make a display of Liberalism, accords large concessions in the direction of local autonomy; and when it discovers that the new institutions do not accomplish all that was expected of them, and are not quite so subservient and obsequious as is considered desirable, it returns in a certain measure to the old principles of centralised bureaucracy.

The great development of trade and industry in recent years has, of course, enriched the mercantile classes, and has introduced into them a more highly educated element, drawn chiefly from the noblesse, which formerly eschewed such occupations; but it has not yet affected very deeply the mode of life of those who have sprung from the old merchant families and the peasantry. When a merchant, contractor, or manufacturer of the old type becomes wealthy he builds for himself a fine house, or buys and thoroughly repairs the house of some ruined noble, and spends money freely on parquet floors, large mirrors, malachite tables, grand pianos by the best makers, and other articles of furniture made of the most costly materials. Occasionally—especially on the

occasion of a marriage or a death in the family—he will give magnificent banquets, and expend enormous sums on gigantic sterlets, choice caviare, foreign fruits, champagne, and all manner of costly delicacies. But this lavish, ostentatious expenditure does not affect the ordinary current of his daily life. As you enter those gaudily furnished rooms you can perceive at a glance that they are not for ordinary use. You notice a rigid symmetry and an indescribable bareness which inevitably suggest that the original arrangements of the upholsterer have never been modified or supplemented. The truth is that by far the greater part of the house is used only on state occasions. The host and his family live downstairs in small, dirty rooms, furnished in a very different, and for them more comfortable, style. At ordinary times the fine rooms are closed, and the fine furniture carefully covered.

If you make a *visite de digestion* after an entertainment, you will probably have some difficulty in gaining admission by the front door. When you have knocked or rung several times, someone will come round from the back regions and ask you what you want. Then follows another long pause, and at last footsteps are heard approaching from within. The bolts are drawn, the door is opened, and you are led up to a spacious drawing-room. At the wall opposite the windows, there is sure to be a sofa, and before it an oval table. At each end of the table, and at right-angles to the sofa, there will be a row of three arm-chairs. The other chairs will be symmetrically arranged round the room. In a few minutes the host will appear, in his long double-breasted black coat and well-polished long boots. His hair is parted in the middle, and his beard shows no trace of scissors or razor.

After the customary greetings have been exchanged, glasses of tea, with slices of lemon and preserves, or perhaps a bottle of champagne, are brought in by way of refreshment. The female members of the family you must not expect to see, unless you are an intimate friend; for the old-fashioned merchants still retain something of that female seclusion which was in vogue among the upper classes before the time of Peter the Great. The host himself will probably be an

intelligent, but totally uneducated and decidedly taciturn, man. About the weather and the crops he may talk fluently enough, but he will not show much inclination to go beyond these topics. You may, perhaps, desire to converse with him on the subject with which he is best acquainted—the trade in which he is himself engaged; but if you make the attempt, you will certainly not gain much information, and you may possibly meet with such an incident as once happened to my travelling companion, a Russian gentleman who had been commissioned by two learned societies to collect information regarding the grain trade. When he called on a merchant who had promised to assist him in his investigations, he was hospitably received; but when he began to speak about the grain trade of the district, the merchant suddenly interrupted him, and proposed to tell him a story. The story was as follows:—

Once on a time a rich landed proprietor had a son, who was a thoroughly spoilt child; and one day the boy said to his father that he wished all the young serfs to come and sing before the door of the house. After some attempts at dissuasion the request was granted, and the young people assembled; but as soon as they began to sing, the boy rushed out and drove them away.

When the merchant had told this apparently pointless story at great length, and with much circumstantial detail, he paused a little, poured some tea into his saucer, drank it off, and then inquired, "Now what do you think was the reason of this strange conduct?"

My friend replied that the riddle surpassed his powers of divination.

"Well," said the merchant, looking hard at him, with a knowing grin, "there was no reason; and all the boy could say was, 'Go away, go away! I've changed my mind; I've changed my mind'" (*poshli von; otkhotyél*).

There was no possibility of mistaking the point of the story. My friend took the hint and departed.

The Russian merchant's love of ostentation is of a peculiar kind—something entirely different from English snobbery. He may delight in gaudy reception rooms, magnificent dinners, fast trotters, costly furs; or he may

display his riches by princely donations to churches, monasteries, or benevolent institutions; but in all this he never affects to be other than he really is. He habitually wears a costume which designates plainly his social position; he makes no attempt to adopt fine manners or elegant tastes; and he never seeks to gain admission to what is called in Russia *la société*. Having no desire to seem what he is not, he has a plain, unaffected manner, and sometimes a quiet dignity, which contrasts favourably with the affected manner of those nobles of the lower ranks who make pretensions to being highly educated and strive to adopt the outward forms of French culture. At his great dinners, it is true, the merchant likes to see among his guests as many "generals"—that is to say, official personages—as possible, and especially those who happen to have a *grand cordon;* but he never dreams of thereby establishing an intimacy with these personages, or of being invited by them in return. It is perfectly understood by both parties that nothing of the kind is meant. The invitation is given and accepted from quite different motives. The merchant has the satisfaction of seeing at his table men of high official rank, and feels that the consideration which he enjoys among people of his own class is thereby augmented. If he succeeds in obtaining the presence of three generals, he obtains a victory over a rival who cannot obtain more than two. The general, on his side, gets a first-rate dinner, *à la russe,* and acquires an undefined right to request subscriptions for public objects or benevolent institutions.

Of course this undefined right is commonly nothing more than a mere tacit understanding, but in certain cases the subject is expressly mentioned. I know of one case in which a regular bargain was made. A Moscow magnate was invited by a merchant to a dinner, and consented to go in full uniform, with all his decorations, on condition that the merchant should subscribe a certain sum to a benevolent institution in which he was particularly interested. It is whispered that such bargains are sometimes made, not on behalf of benevolent institutions, but simply in the interest of the gentleman who accepts the invitation. I cannot believe that there are many official personages who would

consent to let themselves out as table decorations, but that it may happen is proved by the following incident, which accidentally came to my knowledge. A rich merchant of the town of T—— once requested the Governor of the Province to honour a family festivity with his presence, and added that he would consider it a special favour if the "Governoress" would enter an appearance. To this latter request his Excellency made many objections, and at last let the petitioner understand that her Excellency could not possibly be present because she had no velvet dress that could bear comparison with those of several merchants' wives in the town. Two days after the interview a piece of the finest velvet that could be procured in Moscow was received by the Governor from an unknown donor, and his wife was thus enabled to be present at the festivity, to the complete satisfaction of all parties concerned.

It is worthy of remark that the merchants recognise no aristocracy but that of official rank. Many merchants would willingly give twenty pounds for the presence of an "actual State-Councillor," who perhaps never heard of his grandfather, but who can show a *grand cordon;* whilst they would not give twenty pence for the presence of an undecorated Prince without official rank, though he might be able to trace his pedigree up to the half-mythical Rurik. Of the latter they would probably say, "Kto ikh znaet?"—who knows what sort of a fellow he is? The former, on the contrary, whoever his father and grandfather may have been, possesses unmistakable marks of the Tsar's favour, which, in the merchant's opinion, is infinitely more important than any rights or pretensions founded on hereditary titles or long pedigrees.

Some marks of Imperial favour the old-fashioned merchants strive to obtain for themselves. They do not dream of *grands cordons*—that is far beyond their most sanguine expectations—but they do all in their power to obtain those lesser decorations which are granted to the mercantile class. For this purpose the most common expedient is a liberal subscription to some benevolent institution, and occasionally a regular bargain is made. I know of at least one instance where the kind of decoration was

expressly stipulated. The affair illustrates so well the commercial character of these transactions that I venture to state the facts as related to me by the official chiefly concerned. A merchant subscribed to a society which enjoyed the patronage of a Grand Duchess a considerable sum of money, under the express condition that he should receive in return a St. Vladimir Cross. Instead of the desired decoration, which was considered too much for the sum subscribed, a cross of St. Stanislas was granted; but the donor was dissatisfied with the latter, and demanded that his money should be returned to him. The demand had to be complied with, and as an Imperial gift cannot be retracted the merchant had his Stanislas Cross for nothing.

This traffic in decorations has had its natural result. Like paper money issued in too large quantities, the decorations have fallen in value. The gold medals which were formerly much coveted and worn with pride by the rich merchants—suspended by a ribbon round the neck—are now little sought after. In like manner the inordinate respect for official personages has considerably diminished. Fifty years ago the provincial merchants vied with each other in their desire to entertain any great dignitary who honoured their town with a visit, but now they seek rather to avoid this expensive and barren honour. When they do accept the honour, they fulfil the duties of hospitality in a most liberal spirit. I have sometimes, when living as an honoured guest in a rich merchant's house, found it difficult to obtain anything simpler than sterlet, caviare, and champagne.

The two great blemishes on the character of the Russian merchants as a class are, according to general opinion, their ignorance and their dishonesty. As to the former of these there cannot be much difference of opinion. In the last generation many of the merchants could neither read nor write, and were forced to keep their accounts in their memory, or by means of ingenious hieroglyphics, intelligible only to the inventor. Others could decipher the calendar and the lives of the saints, could sign their names with tolerable facility, and could make the simpler arithmetical calculations with the help of the *shtchety*, a little calculating instrument composed of wooden balls strung on brass wires, which

resembles the "abaca" of the old Romans, and is universally used in Russia. It was only the minority who understood the mysteries of regular book-keeping, and of these very few could make any pretensions to being educated men.

All this is rapidly undergoing a radical change. Children are now much better educated than their parents, and the next generation will doubtless make further progress, so that the old-fashioned type above described has almost disappeared. Already there are not a few of the younger generation—especially among the wealthy manufacturers of Moscow —who have been educated abroad, who may be described as "*tout à fait civilisés,*" and whose mode of life differs little from that of the richer nobles; but they remain outside fashionable society, and constitute a "set" of their own.

As to the dishonesty which is said to be so common among the Russian commercial classes, it is more difficult to form an accurate judgment. That an enormous amount of unfair dealing does exist there can be no possible doubt, but in this matter a foreigner is likely to be unduly severe. We are apt to apply unflinchingly our own standard of commercial morality, and to forget that trade in Russia is only emerging from that primitive condition in which fixed prices and moderate profits are entirely unknown. And when we happen to detect positive dishonesty, it seems to us especially heinous, because the trickery employed is more primitive and awkward than that to which we are accustomed. Trickery in weighing and measuring, for instance, which is by no means unknown in Russia, is likely to make us more indignant than those ingenious methods of adulteration which are practised nearer home, and are regarded by many as almost legitimate. Besides this, foreigners who go to Russia and embark in speculations without possessing any adequate knowledge of the character, customs, and language of the people positively invite spoliation, and ought to blame themselves rather than the people who profit by their ignorance.

All this, and much more of the same kind, may be fairly urged in mitigation of the severe judgments which foreign merchants commonly pass on Russian commercial morality, but these judgments cannot be reversed by such argumenta-

tion. The dishonesty and rascality which exist among the merchants are fully recognised by the Russians themselves. In all moral affairs the lower classes in Russia are very lenient in their judgments, and are strongly disposed, like the Americans, to admire what is called in Transatlantic phraseology "a smart man," though the smartness is known to contain a large admixture of dishonesty; and yet the *vox populi* in Russia emphatically declares that the merchants as a class are unscrupulous and dishonest. There is a rude popular play, in which the Devil, as principal *dramatis persona,* succeeds in cheating all manner and conditions of men, but is finally over-reached by a genuine Russian merchant. When this play used to be acted in the Carnival Theatre in St. Petersburg, the audience invariably agreed with the moral of the plot.

If this play were acted in the southern towns near the coast of the Black Sea it would be necessary to modify it considerably, for here, in company with Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, the Russian merchants seem honest by comparison. As to Greeks and Armenians, I know not which of the two nationalities deserves the palm, but it seems that both are surpassed by the Children of Israel. "How these Jews do business," I have heard a Russian merchant of this region exclaim, "I cannot understand. They buy up wheat in the villages at eleven roubles per *tchetvert,* transport it to the coast at their own expense, and sell it to the exporters at ten roubles! And yet they contrive to make a profit! It is said that the Russian trader is cunning, but here 'our brother' (i.e. the Russian) can do nothing." The truth of this statement I had abundant opportunities of confirming by personal investigations on the spot.

If I might express a general opinion regarding Russian commercial morality, I should say that trade in Russia is carried on very much on the same principle as horse-dealing in England. A man who wishes to buy or sell must trust to his own knowledge and acuteness, and if he gets the worst of a bargain or lets himself be deceived, he has himself to blame. Commercial Englishmen on arriving in Russia rarely understand this, and when they know it theoretically they are too often unable, from their ignorance of the

language, the laws, and the customs of the people, to turn their theoretical knowledge to account. They indulge, therefore, at first in endless invectives against the prevailing dishonesty; but gradually, when they have paid what Germans call *Lehrgeld*, they accommodate themselves to circumstances, take large profits to counterbalance bad debts, and generally succeed—if they have sufficient energy, mother-wit, and capital—in making a very handsome income.

The old race of British merchants, however, is rapidly dying out, and I greatly fear that the rising generation will not be equally successful. Times have changed. It is no longer possible to amass large fortunes in the old easy-going fashion. Every year the conditions alter, and the competition increases. In order to foresee, understand, and take advantage of the changes, one must have far more knowledge of the country than the men of the old school possessed, and it seems to me that the young generation have still less of that knowledge than their predecessors. Unless some change takes place in this respect, the German merchants, who have generally a much better commercial education and are much better acquainted with their adopted country, will ultimately, I believe, expel their British rivals. Already many branches of commerce formerly carried on by Englishmen have passed into their hands.

It must not be supposed that the unsatisfactory organisation of the Russian commercial world is the result of any radical peculiarity of the Russian character. All new countries have to pass through a similar state of things, and in Russia there are already premonitory symptoms of a change for the better. For the present, it is true, the extensive construction of railways and the rapid development of banks and limited liability companies have opened up a new and wide field for all kinds of commercial swindling; but, on the other hand, there are now in every large town a certain number of merchants who carry on business in the West-European manner, and have learnt by experience that honesty is the best policy. The success which many of these have obtained will doubtless cause their example to be followed. The old spirit of caste and routine which has long

animated the merchant class is rapidly disappearing, and not a few nobles are now exchanging country life and the service of the State for industrial and commercial enterprises. In this way is being formed the nucleus of that wealthy, enlightened *bourgeoisie* which Catherine endeavoured to create by legislation; but many years must elapse before this class acquires sufficient social and political significance to deserve the title of a *tiers-état*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PASTORAL TRIBES OF THE STEPPE

WHEN I had spent a couple of years or more in the northern and north-central provinces—the land of forests and of agriculture conducted on the three-field system, with here and there a town of respectable antiquity—I determined to visit, for purposes of comparison and contrast, the south-eastern region, which possesses no forests nor ancient towns, and corresponds to the Far West in the United States of America. My point of departure was Yaroslavl—a town on the right bank of the Volga to the north-east of Moscow—and thence I sailed down the river during three days on a large, comfortable steamer to Samára, the chief town of the province or "government" of the name. Here I left the steamer and prepared to make a journey into the eastern Hinterland.

Samára is a new town, a child of the last century. At the time of my first visit, nearly forty years ago, it recalled by its unfinished appearance the new towns of America. Many of the houses were of wood. The streets were still in such a primitive condition that after rain they were almost impassable from mud, and in dry, gusty weather they generated thick clouds of blinding, suffocating dust. Before I had been many days in the place I witnessed a dust hurricane, during which it was impossible at certain moments to see from my window the houses on the other side of the street. Amidst such primitive surroundings the colossal new church seemed a little out of keeping, and it occurred to my practical British mind that some of the money expended on its construction might have been more profitably employed. But the Russians have their own ideas of the fitness of things. Religious after their own fashion, they subscribe money liberally for ecclesiastical purposes—especially for the building and decoration of their churches.

Besides this, the Government considers that every chief town of a province should possess a cathedral.

In its early days Samára was one of the outposts of Russian colonisation, and had often to take precautions against the raids of the nomadic tribes living in the vicinity; but the agricultural frontier has since been pushed far forward to the east and south, and the province was until lately, despite occasional droughts, one of the most productive in the Empire. The town is the chief market of this region, and therein lies its importance. The grain is brought by the peasants from great distances, and stored in large granaries by the merchants, who send it to Moscow or St. Petersburg. In former days this was a very tedious operation. The boats containing the grain were towed by horses or stout peasants up the rivers and through the canals for hundreds of miles. Then came the period of *cabestans*—unwieldy machines propelled by means of anchors and windlasses. Now these primitive methods of transport have disappeared. The grain is either dispatched by rail or put into gigantic barges, which are towed up the river by powerful tug-steamers to some point connected with the great network of railways.

When I had visited the Cathedral and the granaries I felt that I had seen all the lions—not very formidable lions, truly—of the place. I then proceeded to inspect the kumyss establishments, pleasantly situated near the town. Here I found a considerable number of patients—mostly consumptive—who drank enormous quantities of fermented mare's milk, and who declared that they received great benefit from this modern health-restorer.

What interested me more than the lions of the town or the suburban kumyss establishments were the offices of the local administration, where I found in the archives much statistical and other information of the kind I was in search of, regarding the economic condition of the province generally, and of the emancipated peasantry in particular. Having filled my notebooks with material of this sort, I proceeded to verify and complete it by visiting some characteristic villages and questioning the inhabitants. For the student of Russian affairs who wishes to arrive at real, as

distinguished from official, truth, this is a not altogether superfluous operation.

When I had thus made the acquaintance of the sedentary agricultural population in several districts I journeyed eastwards with the intention of visiting the Bashkirs, a Tartar tribe which still preserved—so at least I was assured—its old nomadic habits. My reasons for undertaking this journey were twofold. In the first place I was desirous of seeing with my own eyes some remnants of those terrible nomadic tribes which had at one time conquered Russia and long threatened to over-run Europe—those Tartar hordes which gained, by their irresistible force and relentless cruelty, the reputation of being "the scourge of God." Besides this, I had long wished to study the conditions of pastoral life, and congratulated myself on having found a convenient opportunity of doing so.

As I proceeded eastwards I noticed a change in the appearance of the villages. The ordinary wooden houses, with their high sloping roofs, gradually gave place to flat-roofed huts, built of a peculiar kind of unburnt bricks, composed of mud and straw. I noticed, too, that the population became less and less dense, and the amount of fallow land proportionately greater. The peasants were evidently richer than those near the Volga, but they complained—as the Russian peasant always does—that they had not land enough. In answer to my inquiries why they did not use the thousands of acres that were lying fallow around them, they explained that they had already raised crops on that land for several successive years, and that consequently they must now allow it to "rest."

In one of the villages through which I passed I met with a very characteristic little incident. The village was called Samovólnaya Ivánovka—that is to say, "Ivánovka the Self-willed" or "the Non-authorised." Whilst our horses were being changed my travelling companion, in the course of conversation with a group of peasants, inquired about the origin of this extraordinary name, and discovered a curious bit of local history. The founders of the village had settled on the land without the permission of the absentee owner, and obstinately resisted all attempts at eviction. Again and

again troops had been sent to drive them away, but as soon as the troops retired these "self-willed" people returned and resumed possession, till at last the proprietor, who lived in St. Petersburg or some other distant place, became weary of the contest and allowed them to remain. The various incidents were related with much circumstantial detail, so that the narration lasted perhaps half an hour. All this time I listened attentively, and when the story was finished I took out my notebook in order to jot down the facts, and asked in what year the affair had happened. No answer was given to my question. The peasants merely looked at each other in a significant way and kept silence. Thinking that my question had not been understood, I asked it a second time, repeating a part of what had been related. To my astonishment and utter discomfiture they all declared that they had never related anything of the sort! In despair I appealed to my friend, and asked him whether my ears had deceived me—whether I was labouring under some strange hallucination. Without giving me any reply he simply smiled and turned away.

When we had left the village and were driving along in our *tarantass* the mystery was satisfactorily cleared up. My friend explained to me that I had not at all misunderstood what had been related, but that my abrupt question and the sight of my notebook had suddenly aroused the peasants' suspicions. "They evidently suspected," he continued, "that you were a *tchinóvnik*, and that you wished to use to their detriment the knowledge you had acquired. They thought it safer, therefore, at once to deny it all. You don't yet understand the Russian muzhik!"

In this last remark I was obliged to concur, but since that time I have come to know the muzhik better, and an incident of the kind would now no longer surprise me. From a long series of observations I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of the Russian peasants, when dealing with the authorities, consider the most patent and barefaced falsehoods as a fair means of self-defence. Thus, for example, when a muzhik is implicated in a criminal affair, and a preliminary investigation is being made, he probably begins by constructing an elaborate story to explain the

facts and exculpate himself. The story may be a tissue of self-evident falsehoods from beginning to end, but he defends it valiantly as long as possible. When he perceives that the position which he has taken up is utterly untenable, he declares openly that all he has said is false, and that he wishes to make a new declaration. This second declaration may have the same fate as the former one, and then he proposes a third. Thus groping his way, he tries various stories till he finds one that seems proof against all objections. In the fact of his thus telling lies there is of course nothing remarkable, for criminals in all parts of the world have a tendency to deviate from the truth when they fall into the hands of justice. The peculiarity is that he retracts his statements with the composed air of a chess-player who requests his opponent to let him take back an inadvertent move. Under the old system of procedure, which was abolished in the 'sixties, clever criminals often contrived by means of this simple device to have their trial postponed for many years.

Such incidents naturally astonish a foreigner, and he is apt, in consequence, to pass a very severe judgment on the Russian peasantry in general. The reader may remember Karl Karl'itch's remarks on the subject. These remarks I have heard repeated in various forms by Germans in all parts of the country, and there must be a certain amount of truth in them, for even an eminent Slavophil once publicly admitted that the peasant is prone to perjury.* It is necessary, however, as it seems to me, to draw a distinction. In the ordinary intercourse of peasants among themselves, or with people in whom they have confidence, I do not believe that the habit of lying is abnormally developed. It is only when the muzhik comes in contact with the authorities that he shows himself an expert fabricator of falsehoods. In this there is nothing that need surprise us. For ages the peasantry were exposed to the arbitrary power and ruthless exactions of those who were placed over them; and as the law gave them no means of legally protecting themselves, their only means of self-defence lay in cunning and deceit.

We have here, I believe, the true explanation of that

* Kiréyefski, in the *Rússkaya Beséda*.

"Oriental mendacity" about which Eastern travellers have written so much. It is simply the result of a lawless state of society. Suppose a truth-loving Englishman falls into the hands of brigands or savages. Will he not, if he have merely an ordinary moral character, consider himself justified in inventing a few falsehoods in order to effect his escape? If so, we have no right to condemn very severely the hereditary mendacity of those races which have lived for many generations in a position analogous to that of the supposed Englishman among brigands. When legitimate interests cannot be protected by truthfulness and honesty, prudent people always learn to employ means which experience has proved to be more effectual. In a country where the law does not afford protection, the strong man defends himself by his strength, the weak by cunning and duplicity. This fully explains the fact that in Turkey the Christians are less truthful than the Mahometans.

But we have wandered a long way from the road to Bashkiria. Let us therefore return at once.

Of all the journeys which I made in Russia this was one of the most agreeable. The weather was bright and warm, without being unpleasantly hot; the roads were tolerably smooth; the *tarantass,* which had been hired for the whole journey, was nearly as comfortable as a *tarantass* can be; good milk, eggs, and white bread could be obtained in abundance; there was not much difficulty in procuring horses in the villages through which we passed, and the owners of them were not very extortionate in their demands. But what most contributed to my comfort was that I was accompanied by an agreeable, intelligent young Russian, who kindly undertook to make all the necessary arrangements, and I was thereby freed from those annoyances and worries which are always encountered in primitive countries where travelling is not yet a recognised institution. To him I left the entire control of our movements, passively acquiescing in everything, and asking no questions as to what was coming. Taking advantage of my passivity, he prepared for me one evening a pleasant little surprise.

About sunset we had left a village called Morsha, and shortly afterwards, feeling drowsy, and being warned by my

companion that we should have a long, uninteresting drive, I had lain down in the *tarantass* and gone to sleep. On awaking I found that the *tarantass* had stopped, and that the stars were shining brightly overhead. A big dog was barking furiously close at hand, and I heard the voice of the *yamstchik* informing us that we had arrived. I at once sat up and looked about me, expecting to see a village of some kind, but instead of that I perceived a wide open space, and at a short distance a group of haystacks. Close to the *tarantass* stood two figures in long cloaks, armed with big sticks, and speaking to each other in an unknown tongue. My first idea was that we had been somehow led into a trap, so I drew my revolver in order to be ready for all emergencies. My companion was still snoring loudly by my side, and stoutly resisted all my efforts to awake him.

"What's this?" I said, in a gruff, angry voice, to the *yamstchik*. "Where have you taken us to?"

"To where I was ordered, master!"

For the purpose of getting a more satisfactory explanation I took to shaking my sleepy companion, but before he had returned to consciousness the moon shone out brightly from behind a thick bank of clouds, and cleared up the mystery. The supposed haystacks turned out to be tents. The two figures with long sticks, whom I had suspected of being brigands, were peaceable shepherds, dressed in the ordinary Oriental *khalát*, and tending their sheep, which were grazing close by. Instead of being in an empty hayfield, as I had imagined, we had before us a regular Tartar *aoul*, such as I had often read about. For a moment I felt astonished and bewildered. It seemed to me that I had fallen asleep in Europe and awoke in Asia!

In a few minutes we were comfortably installed in one of the tents, a circular, cupola-shaped erection, of about twelve feet in diameter, composed of a framework of light wooden rods covered with thick felt. It contained no furniture, except a goodly quantity of carpets and pillows, which had been formed into a bed for our accommodation. Our amiable host, who was evidently somewhat astonished at our unexpected visit, but refrained from asking questions, soon bade us good-night and retired. We were not, how-

ever, left alone. A large number of black beetles remained and gave us a welcome in their own peculiar fashion. Whether they were provided with wings, or made up for the want of flying appliances by crawling up the sides of the tent and dropping down on any object they wished to reach, I did not discover, but certain it is that they somehow reached our heads—even when we were standing upright—and clung to our hair with wonderful tenacity. Why they should show such a marked preference for human hair we could not conjecture, till it occurred to us that the natives habitually shaved their heads, and that these beetles must naturally consider a hair-covered cranium a curious novelty deserving of careful examination. Like all children of nature they were decidedly indiscreet and troublesome in their curiosity, but when the light was extinguished they took the hint and departed.

When we awoke next morning it was broad daylight, and we found a crowd of natives in front of the tent. Our arrival was evidently regarded as an important event, and all the inhabitants of the *aoul* were anxious to make our acquaintance. First our host came forward. He was a short, slimly-built man, of middle age, with a grave, severe expression, indicating an unsociable disposition. We afterwards learned that he was an *akhún**—that is to say, a minor officer of the Mahometan ecclesiastical administration, and at the same time a small trader in silken and woollen stuffs. With him came the mullah, or priest, a portly old gentleman with an open, honest face of the European type, and a fine grey beard. The other important members of the little community followed. They were all swarthy in colour, and had the small eyes and prominent cheek-bones which are characteristic of the Tartar races, but they had little of that flatness of countenance and peculiar ugliness which distinguish the pure Mongol. All of them, with the exception of the mullah, spoke a little Russian, and used it to assure us that we were welcome. The children remained respectfully in the background, and the women, with veiled faces, eyed us furtively from the doors of the tents.

* I presume this is the same word as *akhund*, well known on the North-West Frontier of India, where it was applied specially to the late ruler of Svat.

The *aoul* consisted of about twenty tents, all constructed on the same model, and scattered about in sporadic fashion without the least regard to symmetry. Close by was a water-course, which appears in some maps as a river, under the name of Karalýk, but which was at that time merely a succession of pools containing a dark-coloured liquid. As we more than suspected that these pools supplied the inhabitants with water for culinary purposes, the sight was not calculated to whet our appetites. We turned away, therefore, hurriedly, and for want of something better to do we watched the preparations for dinner. These were decidedly primitive. A sheep was brought near the door of our tent, and there killed, skinned, cut up into pieces, and put into an immense pot, under which a fire had been kindled.

The dinner itself was not less primitive than the method of preparing it. The table consisted of a large napkin spread in the middle of the tent, and the chairs were represented by cushions, on which we sat cross-legged. There were no plates, knives, forks, spoons, or chopsticks. Guests were expected all to eat out of a common wooden bowl, and to use the instruments with which Nature had provided them. The service was performed by the host and his son. The fare was copious, but not varied—consisting entirely of boiled mutton, without bread or other substitute, and a little salted horse-flesh thrown in as an entrée.

To eat out of the same dish with half a dozen Mahometans, who accept their Prophet's injunction about ablutions in a highly figurative sense, and who are totally unacquainted with the use of forks and spoons, is not an agreeable operation, even if one is not much troubled with religious prejudices; but with these Bashkirs, something worse than this has to be encountered, for their favourite method of expressing their esteem and affection for one with whom they are eating consists in putting bits of mutton, and sometimes even handfuls of hashed meat, into his mouth! When I discovered this unexpected peculiarity in Bashkir manners and customs, I almost regretted that I had made a favourable impression upon my new acquaintances.

When the sheep had been devoured, partly by the company in the tent and partly by a nondescript company

outside—for the whole *aoul* took part in the festivities—kumyss was served in unlimited quantities. This beverage, as I have already explained, is mare's milk fermented; but what here passed under the name was very different from the kumyss I had tasted in the *établissements* of Samára. There it was a pleasant, effervescing drink, with only the slightest tinge of acidity; here it was a "still" liquid, strongly resembling very thin and very sour butter-milk. My Russian friend made a wry face on first tasting it, and I felt inclined at first to do likewise, but noticing that his grimaces made an unfavourable impression on the audience, I restrained my facial muscles, and looked as if I liked it. Very soon I really came to like it, and learned to "drink fair" with those who had been accustomed to it from their childhood. By this feat I rose considerably in the estimation of the natives; for if one does not drink kumyss one cannot be sociable in the Bashkir sense of the term, and by acquiring the habit one adopts an essential principle of Bashkir nationality. I should certainly have preferred having a cup of it to myself, but I thought it well to conform to the habits of the country, and to accept the big wooden bowl when it was passed round. In return my friends made an important concession in my favour: they allowed me to smoke as I pleased, though they considered that, as the Prophet had refrained from tobacco, ordinary mortals should do the same.

Whilst the "loving-cup" was going round I distributed some small presents which I had brought for the purpose, and then proceeded to explain the object of my visit. In the distant country from which I came—far away to the westward—I had heard of the Bashkirs as a people possessing many strange customs, but very kind and hospitable to strangers. Of their kindness and hospitality I had already learned something by experience, and I hoped they would allow me to learn something of their mode of life, their customs, their songs, their history, and their religion, in all of which I assured them my distant countrymen took a lively interest.

This little after-dinner speech was perhaps not quite in accordance with Bashkir etiquette, but it made a favourable impression. There was a decided murmur of approbation,

and those who understood Russian translated my words to their less accomplished brethren. A short consultation ensued, and then there was a general shout of "Abdullah! Abdullah!" which was taken up and repeated by those standing outside.

In a few minutes Abdullah appeared, with a big, half-picked bone in his hand, and the lower part of his face besmeared with grease. He was a short, thin man, with a dark, sallow complexion, and a look of premature old age; but the suppressed smile that played about his mouth and a tremulous movement of his right eyelid showed plainly that he had not yet forgotten the fun and frolic of youth. His dress was of richer and more gaudy material, but at the same time more tawdry and tattered, than that of the others. Altogether he looked like an *artiste* in distressed circumstances, and such he really was. At a word and a sign from the host he laid aside his bone and drew from under his green silk *khalát* a small wind-instrument resembling a flute or flageolet. On this he played a number of native airs. The first melodies which he played reminded me of a Highland pibroch—at one moment low, solemn, and plaintive, then gradually rising into a soul-stirring, martial strain, and again descending to a plaintive wail. The amount of expression which he put into his simple instrument was truly marvellous. Then, passing suddenly from grave to gay, he played a series of light, merry airs, and some of the younger onlookers got up and performed a dance as boisterous and ungraceful as an Irish jig.

This Abdullah turned out to be for me a most valuable acquaintance. He was a kind of Bashkir troubadour, well acquainted not only with the music, but also with the traditions, the history, the superstitions, and the folk-lore of his people. By the *akhún* and the mullah he was regarded as a frivolous, worthless fellow, who had no regular, respectable means of gaining a livelihood, but among the men of less rigid principles he was a general favourite. As he spoke Russian fluently I could converse with him freely without the aid of an interpreter, and he willingly placed his store of knowledge at my disposal. When in the company of the *akhún* he was always solemn and taciturn, but as soon

as he was relieved of that dignitary's presence he became lively and communicative.

Another of my new acquaintances was equally useful to me in another way. This was Mehemet Zián, who was not so intelligent as Abdullah, but much more sympathetic. In his open, honest face, and kindly, unaffected manner, there was something so irresistibly attractive that before I had known him twenty-four hours a sort of friendship had sprung up between us. He was a tall, muscular, broad-shouldered man, with features that suggested a mixture of European blood. Though already past middle age, he was still wiry and active—so active that he could, when on horseback, pick a stone off the ground without dismounting. He could, however, no longer perform this feat at full gallop, as he had been wont to do in his youth. His geographical knowledge was extremely limited and inaccurate—his mind being in this respect like those old Russian maps in which the nations of the earth and a good many peoples who had never more than a mythical existence are jumbled together in hopeless confusion—but his geographical curiosity was insatiable. My travelling-map—the first thing of the kind he had ever seen—interested him deeply. When he found that by simply examining it and glancing at my compass I could tell him the direction and distance of places he knew, his face was like that of a child who sees for the first time a conjurer's performance; and when I explained the trick to him, and taught him to calculate the distance to Bokhara—the sacred city of the Mussulmans of that region—his delight was unbounded. Gradually I perceived that to possess such a map had become the great object of his ambition. Unfortunately I could not at once gratify him as I should have wished, because I had a long journey before me and I had no other map of the region, but I promised to find ways and means of sending him one, and I kept my word by means of a native of the Karalýk district whom I discovered in Samára. I did not add a compass because I could not find one in the town, and it would have been of little use to him because, like a true child of Nature, he always knew the cardinal points by the sun or the stars. Some years later I had the satisfaction of learning, through no less a personage than

Count Tolstoy, that the map had reached its destination safely. One evening, at the house of a friend in Moscow, I was presented to the great novelist, and as soon as he heard my name he said, "Oh! I know you already, and I know your friend Mehemet Zián. When I passed a night this summer in his *aoul* he showed me a map with your signature in the margin, and taught me how to calculate the distance to Bokhara!"

If Mehemet knew little of foreign countries he was thoroughly well acquainted with his own, and repaid me most liberally for my elementary lessons in geography. With him I visited the neighbouring *aouls*. In all of them he had numerous acquaintances, and everywhere we were received with the greatest hospitality, except on one occasion when we paid a visit of ceremony to a famous robber who was the terror of the whole neighbourhood. Certainly he was one of the most brutalised specimens of humanity I have ever encountered. He made no attempt to be amiable, and I felt inclined to leave his tent at once; but I saw that my friend wanted to conciliate him, so I restrained my feelings and eventually established tolerably good relations with him. As a rule I avoided festivities, partly because I knew that my hosts were mostly poor and would not accept payment for the slaughtered sheep, and partly because I had reason to apprehend that they would express to me their esteem and affection *more Bashkirico;* but in kumyss drinking, the ordinary occupation of these people when they have nothing to do, I had to indulge to a most inordinate extent. On these expeditions Abdullah generally accompanied us, and rendered valuable service as interpreter and troubadour. Mehemet could express himself in Russian, but his vocabulary failed him as soon as the conversation ran above very ordinary topics; Abdullah, on the contrary, was a first-rate interpreter, and under the influence of his musical pipe and lively talkativeness new acquaintances became sociable and communicative. Poor Abdullah! He was a kind of universal genius; but his faded, tattered *khalát* showed only too plainly that in Bashkiria, as in more civilised countries, universal genius and the artistic temperament lead to poverty rather than wealth.

I have no intention of troubling the reader with the miscellaneous facts which, with the assistance of these two friends, I succeeded in collecting—indeed, I could not if I would, for the notes I then made were afterwards lost—but I wish to say a few words about the actual economic condition of the Bashkirs. They are at present passing from pastoral to agricultural life; and it is not a little interesting to note the causes which induce them to make this change, and the way in which it is made.

Philosophers have long held a theory of social development according to which men were at first hunters, then shepherds, and lastly agriculturists. How far this theory is in accordance with reality we need not for the present inquire, but we may examine an important part of it and ask ourselves the question, Why did pastoral tribes adopt agriculture? The common explanation is that they changed their mode of life in consequence of some ill-defined, fortuitous circumstances. A great legislator arose amongst them and taught them to till the soil, or they came in contact with an agricultural race and adopted the customs of their neighbours. Such explanations must appear unsatisfactory to anyone who has lived with a pastoral people. Pastoral life is so incomparably more agreeable than the hard lot of the agriculturist, and so much more in accordance with the natural indolence of human nature, that no great legislator, though he had the wisdom of a Solon and the eloquence of a Demosthenes, could possibly induce his fellow-countrymen to pass voluntarily from the one to the other. Of all the ordinary means of gaining a livelihood—with the exception, perhaps, of mining—agriculture is the most laborious, and is never voluntarily adopted by men who have not been accustomed to it from their childhood. The life of a pastoral race, on the contrary, is a perennial holiday, and I can imagine nothing except the prospect of starvation which could induce men who live by their flocks and herds to make the transition to agricultural life.

The prospect of starvation is, in fact, the cause of the transition—probably in all cases, and certainly in the case of the Bashkirs. So long as they had abundance of pasturage they never thought of tilling the soil. Their flocks

and herds supplied them with all that they required, and enabled them to lead a tranquil, indolent existence. No great legislator arose among them to teach them the use of the plough and the sickle, and when they saw the Russian peasants on their borders laboriously ploughing and reaping, they looked on them with compassion, and never thought of following their example. But an impersonal legislator came to them—a very severe and tyrannical legislator, who would not brook disobedience—I mean Economic Necessity. By the encroachments of the Ural Cossacks on the east, and by the ever-advancing wave of Russian colonisation from the north and west, their territory had been greatly diminished. With diminution of the pasturage came diminution of the live stock, their sole means of subsistence. In spite of their passively conservative spirit they had to look about for some new means of obtaining food and clothing —some new mode of life requiring less extensive territorial possessions. It was only then that they began to think of imitating their neighbours. They saw that the neighbouring Russian peasant lived comfortably on thirty or forty acres of land, whilst they possessed a hundred and fifty acres per male, and were in danger of starvation.

The conclusion to be drawn from this was self-evident —they ought at once to begin ploughing and sowing. But there was a very serious obstacle to the putting of this principle in practice. Agriculture certainly requires less land than sheep-farming, but it requires very much more labour, and to hard work the Bashkirs were not accustomed. They could bear hardships and fatigues in the shape of long journeys on horseback, but the severe, monotonous labour of the plough and the sickle was not to their taste. At first, therefore, they adopted a compromise. They had a portion of their land tilled by Russian peasants, and ceded to these a part of the produce in return for the labour expended; in other words, they assumed the position of landed proprietors, and farmed part of their land on the *métayage* system.

The process of transition had reached this point in several *aouls* which I visited. My friend Mehemet Zián showed me at some distance from the tents his plot of arable land, and introduced me to the peasant who tilled it—a

Little Russian, who assured me that the arrangement satisfied all parties. The process of transition cannot, however, stop here. The compromise is merely a temporary expedient. Virgin soil gives very abundant harvests, sufficient to support both the labourer and the indolent proprietor, but after a few years the soil becomes exhausted and gives only a very moderate revenue. A proprietor, therefore, must sooner or later dispense with the labourers, who take half of the produce as their recompense, and must himself put his hand to the plough.

Thus we see the Bashkirs are, properly speaking, no longer a purely pastoral, nomadic people. The discovery of this fact caused me some little disappointment, and in the hope of finding a tribe in a more primitive condition I went on to the Kirghiz of the Inner Horde, who occupy the country to the southward, in the direction of the Caspian. Here for the first time I saw the genuine Steppe in the full sense of the term—a country level as the sea, with not a hillock or even a gentle undulation to break the straight line of the horizon, and not a patch of cultivation, a tree, a bush, or even a stone, to diversify the monotonous expanse.

Traversing such a region is, I need scarcely say, very weary work—all the more as there are no milestones or other landmarks to show the progress you are making. Still, it is not so overwhelmingly wearisome as might be supposed. In the morning you may watch the vast lakes, with their rugged promontories and well-wooded banks, which the mirage creates for your amusement. Then during the course of the day there are always one or two trifling incidents which arouse you for a little from your somnolence. Now you descry a couple of horsemen on the distant horizon, and watch them as they approach; and when they come alongside you may have a talk with them if you know their language or have an interpreter; or you may amuse yourself with a little pantomime if articulate speech is impossible. Now you encounter a long train of camels marching along with solemn, stately step, and speculate as to the contents of the big packages with which they are laden. Now you encounter the carcass of a horse that has fallen by the wayside, and watch the dogs and the steppe eagles fighting

over their prey; and if you are murderously inclined you may take a shot with your revolver at these great birds, for they are ignorantly brave, and will sometimes allow you to approach within twenty or thirty yards. At last you perceive —most pleasant sight of all—a group of haystack-shaped tents in the distance; and you hurry on to enjoy the grateful shade, and quench your thirst with "deep, deep draughts" of refreshing kumyss.

During my journey through the Kirghiz country I was accompanied by a Russian gentleman, who had provided himself with a circular letter from the hereditary chieftain of the Horde, a personage who rejoiced in the imposing name of Genghis Khan,* and claimed to be a descendant of the great Mongol conqueror. This document assured us a good reception in the *aouls* through which we passed. Every Kirghiz who saw it treated it with profound respect, and professed to put all his goods and chattels at our service. But in spite of this powerful recommendation we met with none of that friendly cordiality and communicativeness which I had found among the Bashkirs. A tent with an unlimited quantity of cushions was always set apart for our accommodation; the sheep were killed and boiled for our dinner, and the pails of kumyss were regularly brought for our refreshment; but all this was evidently done as a matter of duty and not as a spontaneous expression of hospitality. When we determined once or twice to prolong our visit beyond the term originally announced, I could perceive that our host was not at all delighted by the change of our plans. The only consolation we had was that those who entertained us made no scruples about accepting payment for the food and shelter supplied.

From all this I have no intention of drawing the conclusion that the Kirghiz are, as a people, inhospitable or unfriendly to strangers. My experience of them is too limited to warrant any such inference. The letter of Genghis Khan ensured us all the accommodation we required, but it at the same time gave us a certain official character not at all favourable to the establishment of friendly relations.

* I have adopted the ordinary English spelling of this name. The Kirghiz and the Russians pronounce it "Tchinghiz."

Those with whom we came in contact regarded us as Russian officials, and suspected us of having some secret designs. As I endeavoured to discover the number of their cattle, and to form an approximate estimate of their annual revenue, they naturally feared—having no conception of disinterested scientific curiosity—that these data were being collected for the purpose of increasing the taxes, or with some similar intention of a sinister kind. Very soon I perceived clearly that any information we might here collect regarding the economic conditions of pastoral life would not be of much value, and I postponed my proposed studies to a more convenient season.

The Kirghiz are, ethnographically speaking, closely allied to the Bashkirs, but differ from them both in physiognomy and language. Their features approach much nearer to the pure Mongol type, and their language is a distinct dialect, which a Bashkir or a Tartar of Kazán has some difficulty in understanding. They are professedly Mahometans, but their Mahometanism is not of a rigid kind, as may be seen by the fact that their women do not veil their faces even in the presence of Ghiaours—a laxness of which the Ghiaour will certainly not approve if he happen to be sensitive to female beauty and ugliness. Their manners and customs differ little from those of the Bashkirs, but they have proportionately more land and are consequently still able to lead a purely pastoral life. Near their western frontier, it is true, they annually let patches of land to the Russian peasants for the purpose of raising crops; but these encroachments can never advance very far, for the greater part of their territory is unsuited to agriculture, on account of a large admixture of salt in the soil. This fact will have an important influence on their future. Unlike the Bashkirs, who possess good arable land, and are consequently on the road to becoming agriculturists, they will in all probability continue to live exclusively by their flocks and herds.

To the south-west of the Lower Volga, in the flat region lying to the north of the Caucasus, I visited another pastoral tribe, the Kalmyks, differing widely from the two former in language, in physiognomy, and in religion. Their language, a dialect of the Mongolian, has no close affinity with any

other language in this part of the world. In respect of religion they are likewise isolated, for they are Buddhists, and have consequently no co-religionists nearer than Mongolia or Tibet. But it is their physiognomy that most strikingly distinguishes them from the surrounding peoples, and stamps them as Mongols of the purest water. There is something almost infra-human in their ugliness. They show in an exaggerated degree all those repulsive traits which we see toned down and refined in the face of an average Chinaman; and it is difficult, when we meet them for the first time, to believe that a human soul lurks behind their expressionless, flattened faces and small, dull, obliquely set eyes. If the Tartar and Turkish races are really descended from ancestors of that type, then we must assume that they have received in the course of time a large admixture of Aryan or Semitic blood.

But we must not be too hard on the poor Kalmyks, or judge of their character by their unprepossessing appearance. They are by no means so unhuman as they look. Men who have lived among them have assured me that they are decidedly intelligent, especially in all matters relating to cattle, and that they are—though somewhat addicted to cattle-lifting and other primitive customs not tolerated in the more advanced stages of civilisation—by no means wanting in some of the better qualities of human nature.

Formerly there was a fourth pastoral tribe in this region —the Nogaï Tartars. They occupied the plains to the north of the Sea of Azof, but they are no longer to be found there. Shortly after the Crimean War they emigrated to Turkey, and their lands are now occupied by Russian, German, Bulgarian, and Montenegrin colonists.

Among the pastoral tribes of this region the Kalmyks are recent intruders. They first appeared in the seventeenth century, and were long formidable on account of their great numbers and compact organisation; but in 1771 the majority of them suddenly struck their tents and retreated to their old home in the north of the Celestial Empire. Those who remained were easily pacified, and have long since lost, under the influence of unbroken peace and a strong Russian administration, their old warlike spirit. Their latest military

exploits were performed during the last years of the Napoleonic wars, and were not of a very serious kind; a troop of them accompanied the Russian army, and astonished Western Europe by their uncouth features, their strange costume, and their primitive accoutrements, among which their curious bows and arrows figured conspicuously.

The other pastoral tribes which I have mentioned—Bashkirs, Kirghiz, and Nogaï Tartars—are the last remnants of the famous marauders who from time immemorial down to a comparatively recent period held the vast plains of Southern Russia. The long struggle between them and the agricultural colonists from the north-west—closely resembling the long struggle between the Redskins and the white settlers on the prairies of North America—forms an important page of Russian history.

For centuries the warlike nomads stoutly resisted all encroachments on their pasture-grounds, and considered cattle-lifting, kidnapping, and pillage as a legitimate and honourable occupation. "Their raids," says an old Byzantine writer, "are as flashes of lightning, and their retreat is at once heavy and light—heavy from booty and light from the swiftness of their movements. For them a peaceful life is a misfortune, and a convenient opportunity for war is the height of felicity. Worst of all, they are more numerous than bees in spring; their numbers are uncountable." "Having no fixed place of abode," says another Byzantine authority, "they seek to conquer lands and colonise none. They are flying people, and therefore cannot be caught. As they have neither towns nor villages, they must be hunted like wild beasts, and can be fitly compared only to griffins, which beneficent Nature has banished to uninhabited regions." As a Persian distich, quoted by Vambéry, has it—

> "They came, conquered, burned,
> Pillaged, murdered, and went."

Their raids are thus described by an old Russian chronicler: "They burn the villages, the farmyards, and the churches. The land is turned by them into a desert, and the overgrown fields become the lair of wild beasts. Many people are led away into slavery; others are tortured and killed, or die

from hunger and thirst. Sad, weary, stiff from cold, with faces wan from woe, barefoot or naked, and torn by the thistles, the Russian prisoners trudge along through an unknown country, and, weeping, say to one another, 'I am from such a town, and I from such a village.'" And in harmony with the monastic chroniclers we hear the nameless Slavonic Ossian wailing for the fallen sons of Rūs:— "In the Russian land is rarely heard the voice of the husbandmen, but often the cry of the vultures, fighting with each other over the bodies of the slain; and the ravens scream as they fly to the spoil."

In spite of the stubborn resistance of the nomads, the wave of colonisation moved steadily onwards until the early years of the thirteenth century, when it was suddenly checked and thrown back. A great Mongolian horde from Eastern Asia, far more numerous and better organised than the local nomadic tribes, overran the whole country, and for more than two centuries Russia was in a certain sense ruled by Mongol Khans. As I wish to speak at some length of this Mongol domination, I shall devote to it a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MONGOL OR TARTAR DOMINATION *

THE Tartar invasion, with its direct and indirect consequences, is a subject which has more than a mere antiquarian interest. To the influence of the Mongols are commonly attributed many peculiarities in the actual condition and national character of the Russians of the present day, and some writers would even have us believe that the men whom we call Russians are simply Tartars half disguised by a thin varnish of European civilisation. It may be well, therefore, to inquire what the Tartar or Mongol domination really was, and how far it affected the historical development and national character of the Russian people.

The story of the conquest may be briefly told. In 1224 the chieftains of the Polovtsi—one of those pastoral tribes which roamed on the Steppe and habitually carried on a predatory warfare with the Russians of the south—sent deputies to Mistislaf the Brave, Prince of Galicia, to inform him that their country had been invaded from the south-east by strong, cruel enemies called Tartars †—strange-looking men with brown faces, eyes small and wide apart, thick lips, broad shoulders, and black hair. "To-day," said the

* The terms "Mongol" and "Tartar" are used indiscriminately by most writers, mediæval and modern, Russian and West European, to designate a great number of Oriental tribes differing widely from each other in physical type, in language, and in social organisation. Stretching from Europe, through Northern and Central Asia, to the shores of the Pacific, these tribes are so unlike each other that it is difficult to find any trait common to them all, except the negative characteristic that they are neither Aryans nor Semites. Sometimes they are generically styled "Turanians," but no one has yet been able to explain what ethnographical or linguistic peculiarities are connoted by that designation. The truth is that this large section of the human race has never been carefully studied by competent ethnologists and philologists, and consequently our knowledge of it is still vague and unscientific. My own opinion is that it is composed of at least two, and possibly more, groups which have no ethnological or linguistic affinities with each other.

† The word is properly "Tatar," and the Russians write and pronounce it in this way, but I have preferred to retain the better known form.

deputies, "they have seized our country, and to-morrow they will seize yours if you do not help us."

Mistislaf had probably no objection to the Polovtsi being annihilated by some tribe stronger and fiercer than themselves, for they gave him a great deal of trouble by their frequent raids; but he perceived the force of the argument about his own turn coming next, and thought it wise to assist his usually hostile neighbours. For the purpose of warding off the danger he called together the neighbouring Princes, and urged them to join in an expedition against the new enemy. The expedition was undertaken, and ended in disaster. On the Kalka, a small river falling into the Sea of Azof, the Russian host met the invaders, and was completely routed. The country was thereby opened to the victors, but they did not follow up their advantage. After advancing for some distance they suddenly wheeled round and disappeared.

Thus ended unexpectedly the first visit of these unwelcome strangers. Thirteen years afterwards they returned, and were not so easily got rid of. An enormous horde crossed the River Ural, and advanced into the heart of the country, pillaging, burning, devastating, and murdering. The Princes made no attempt to combine against the common enemy. Nearly all the principal towns were laid in ashes, and the inhabitants were killed or carried off as slaves. Having conquered Russia, they advanced westward, and threw all Europe into alarm. The panic reached even England, and interrupted, it is said, for a time the herring fishery on the coast. Western Europe, however, escaped their ravages. After visiting Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Servia, and Dalmatia, they retreated to the Lower Volga, and the Russian Princes were summoned thither to do homage to the victorious Khan.

At first the Russians had only very vague notions as to who this terrible enemy was. The old chronicler remarks briefly:—"For our sins unknown peoples have appeared. No one knows who they are or whence they have come, or to what race and faith they belong. They are commonly called Tartars, but some call them Tauermen, and others Petchenegs. Who they really are is known only to God,

and perhaps to wise men deeply read in books." Some of these "wise men deeply read in books" supposed them to be the idolatrous Moabites who had in Old Testament times harassed God's chosen people, whilst others thought that they must be the descendants of the men whom Gideon had driven out, of whom a revered saint had prophesied that they would come in the latter days and conquer the whole earth, from the East even unto the Euphrates, and from the Tigris even unto the Black Sea.

We are now happily in a position to dispense with such vague ethnographical speculations. From the accounts of several European travellers who visited Tartary about that time, and from the writings of various Oriental historians, we know a great deal about these barbarians who conquered Russia and frightened the Western nations.

The vast region lying to the east of Russia, from the basin of the Volga to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, was inhabited then, as it is still, by numerous Tartar and Mongol tribes. These two terms are often regarded as identical and interchangeable, but they ought, I think, to be distinguished. From the ethnographic, the linguistic, and the religious point of view they differ widely from each other. The Kazan Tartars, the Bashkirs, the Kirghiz, in a word, all the tribes of the country stretching latitudinally from the Volga to Kashgar, and longitudinally from the Persian frontier, the Hindu Kush and the Northern Himalaya, to a line drawn east and west through the middle of Siberia, belong to what may be called the Tartar group; whereas those farther eastward, occupying Mongolia and Manchuria, are Mongol in the stricter sense of the term.

A very little experience enables the traveller to distinguish between the two. Both of them have the well-known characteristics of the Northern Asiatic—the broad flat face, yellow skin, small, obliquely set eyes, high cheek-bones, thin, straggling beard; but these traits are more strongly marked, more exaggerated, if we may use such an expression, in the Mongol than in the Tartar. Thus the Mongol is, according to our conceptions, by far the uglier of the two, and the man of Tartar race, when seen beside him, appears almost European by comparison. The distinction

is confirmed by a study of their languages. All the Tartar languages are closely allied, so that a person of average linguistic talent who has mastered one of them, whether it be the rude Turki of Central Asia or the highly polished Turkish of Stambul, can easily acquire any of the others; whereas even an extensive acquaintance with Tartar dialects will be of no practical use to him in learning a language of the Mongol group. In their religions likewise the two races differ. The Mongols are as a rule Shamanists or Buddhists, while the Tartars are Mahometans. Some of the Mongol invaders, it is true, adopted Mahometanism from the conquered Tartar tribes, and by this change of religion, which led naturally to intermarriage, their descendants became gradually blended with the older population; but the broad line of distinction was not permanently effaced.

It is often supposed, even by people who profess to be acquainted with Russian history, that Mongols and Tartars alike first came westward to the frontiers of Europe with Genghis Khan. This is true of the Mongols, but so far as the Tartars are concerned it is an entire mistake. From time immemorial, the Tartar tribes roamed over these territories. Like the Russians, they were conquered by the Mongol invaders and had long to pay tribute, and when the Mongol Empire crumbled to pieces and finally disappeared, the Tartars reappeared from the confusion without having lost, notwithstanding an intermixture of Mongol blood, their old racial characteristics, their old dialects, and their old tribal organisation.

The germ of the vast horde which swept over Asia and advanced into the centre of Europe was a small pastoral tribe of Mongols living in the hilly country to the north of China, near the sources of the Amur. This tribe was neither more warlike nor more formidable than its neighbours till near the close of the twelfth century, when there appeared in it a man who is described as "a mighty hunter before the Lord." Of him and his people we have a brief description by a Chinese author of the time:—"A man of gigantic stature, with broad forehead and long beard, and remarkable for his bravery. As to his people, their faces are broad, flat, and four-cornered, with prominent cheek-bones; their

eyes have no upper eyelashes; they have very little hair in their beards and moustaches; their exterior is very repulsive." This man of gigantic stature was no other than Genghis Khan. He began by subduing and incorporating into his army the surrounding tribes, conquered with their assistance a great part of Northern China, and then, leaving one of his generals to complete the conquest of the Celestial Empire, he led his army westward with the ambitious design of conquering the whole world. "As there is but one God in heaven," he was wont to say, "so there should be but one ruler on earth"; and this one universal ruler he himself aspired to be.

A European army necessarily diminishes in force and its existence becomes more and more imperilled as it advances from its base of operations into a foreign and hostile country. Not so a horde like that of Genghis Khan in a country such as that which it had to traverse. It needed no base of operations, for it took with it its flocks, its tents, and all its worldly goods. Properly speaking, it was not an army at all, but rather a people in movement. The grassy Steppes fed the flocks, and the flocks fed the warriors; and with such a simple commissariat system there was no necessity for keeping up communications with the point of departure. Instead of diminishing in numbers, the horde constantly increased as it moved forward. The nomadic tribes which it encountered on its way, composed of men who found a home wherever they found pasture and drinking water, required little persuasion to make them join the onward movement. By means of this terrible instrument of conquest Genghis succeeded in creating a colossal Empire, stretching from the Carpathians to the eastern shores of Asia, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Himalayas.

Genghis was no mere ruthless destroyer; he was at the same time one of the greatest administrators the world has ever seen. But his administrative genius could not work miracles. His vast Empire, founded on conquest and composed of the most heterogeneous elements, had no principle of organic life in it, and could not possibly be long-lived. It had been created by him, and it perished with him. For some time after his death the dignity of Grand Khan was

held by some one of his descendants, and the centralised administration was nominally preserved; but the local rulers rapidly emancipated themselves from the central authority, and within half a century after the death of its founder the great Mongol Empire was little more than "a geographical expression."

With the dismemberment of the short-lived Empire the danger for Eastern Europe was by no means at an end. The independent hordes were scarcely less formidable than the Empire itself. A grandson of Genghis formed on the Russian frontier a new State, commonly known as Kiptchak, or the Golden Horde, and built a capital called Seraï, on one of the arms of the Lower Volga. This capital, which has since so completely disappeared that there is some doubt as to its site, is described by Ibn Batuta, who visited it in the fifteenth century, as a very great, populous, and beautiful city, possessing many mosques, fine market-places, and broad streets, in which were to be seen merchants from Babylon, Egypt, Syria, and other countries. Here lived the Khans of the Golden Horde, who kept Russia in subjection for two centuries.

In conquering Russia the Mongols had no wish to possess themselves of the soil, or to take into their own hands the local administration. What they wanted was not land, of which they had enough and to spare, but movable property which they might enjoy without giving up their pastoral, nomadic life. They applied, therefore, to Russia the same method of extracting supplies as they had used in other regions. As soon as their authority had been formally acknowledged they sent officials into the country to number the inhabitants and to collect an amount of tribute proportionate to the population. This was a severe burden for the people, not only on account of the sum demanded, but also on account of the manner in which it was raised. The exactions and cruelty of the tax-gatherers led to local insurrections, and the insurrections were of course always severely punished. But there was never any general military occupation of the country or any wholesale confiscations of land, and the existing political organisation was left undisturbed. The modern method of dealing with annexed pro-

vinces was totally unknown to the Mongols. The Khans never thought of attempting to denationalise their Russian subjects. They demanded simply an oath of allegiance from the Princes,* and a certain sum of tribute from the people. The vanquished were allowed to retain their land, their religion, their language, their courts of justice, and all their other institutions.

The nature of the Mongol domination is well illustrated by the policy which the conquerors adopted towards the Russian Church. For more than half a century after the conquest the religion of these Western Mongols remained a mixture of Buddhism and Shamanism, with traces of Sabæism or fire-worship. During this period Christianity was more than simply tolerated. The Grand Khan Kuyuk caused a Christian chapel to be erected near his domicile, and one of his successors, Khubilaï, was in the habit of publicly taking part in the Easter festivals. In 1261 the Khan of the Golden Horde allowed the Russians to found a bishopric in his capital, and several members of his family adopted Christianity. One of them even founded a monastery, and became a saint of the Russian Church! The Orthodox clergy were exempted from the poll-tax, and in the charters granted to them it was expressly declared that if anyone committed blasphemy against the faith of the Russians he should be put to death. Some time afterwards the Golden Horde was converted to Islam, but the Khans did not on that account change their policy. They continued to favour the clergy, and their protection was long remembered. Many generations later, when the property of the Church was threatened by the Russian autocratic power, refractory ecclesiastics contrasted the policy of the Orthodox Sovereign with that of the "godless Mongols," much to the advantage of the latter.

At first there was and could be very little mutual confidence between the conquerors and the conquered. The Princes anxiously looked for an opportunity of throwing off the galling yoke, and the people chafed under the exactions and cruelty of the tribute collectors, whilst the Khans took precautions to prevent insurrection, and threatened to

* During the Mongol domination Russia was composed of a large number of independent principalities.

devastate the country if their authority was not respected. But in the course of time this mutual distrust and hostility greatly lessened. When the Princes found by experience that all attempts at resistance were fruitless, they became reconciled to their new position, and instead of seeking to throw off the Khan's authority, they tried to gain his favour, in the hope of forwarding their personal interests. For this purpose they paid frequent visits to the Mongol Suzerain, made rich presents to his wives and courtiers, received from him charters confirming their authority, and sometimes even married members of his family. Some of them used the favour thus acquired for extending their possessions at the expense of neighbouring Princes of their own race, and did not hesitate to call in Mongol hordes to their assistance. The Khans, in their turn, placed greater confidence in their vassals, entrusted them with the task of collecting the tribute, recalled their own officials who were a constant eyesore to the people, and abstained from all interference in the internal affairs of the principalities so long as the tribute was regularly paid. The Princes acted, in short, as the Khan's lieutenants, and became to a certain extent Mongolised. Some of them carried this policy so far that they were reproached by the people with "loving beyond measure the Mongols and their language, and with giving them too freely land, and gold, and goods of every kind."

Had the Khans of the Golden Horde been prudent, far-seeing statesmen, they might have long retained their supremacy over Russia. In reality they showed themselves miserably deficient in political talent. Seeking merely to extract from the country as much tribute as possible, they overlooked all higher considerations, and by this culpable short-sightedness prepared their own political ruin. Instead of keeping all the Russian Princes on the same level and thereby rendering them all equally feeble, they were constantly bribed or cajoled into giving to one or more of their vassals a pre-eminence over the others. At first this pre-eminence consisted in little more than the empty title of Grand Prince—Veliki Knyaz, which is now commonly translated Grand Duke; but the vassals thus favoured soon transformed the barren distinction into a genuine power by

arrogating to themselves the exclusive right of holding direct communications with the Horde, and compelling the minor Princes to deliver to them the Mongol tribute. If any of the lesser Princes refused to acknowledge this intermediate authority, the Grand Prince could easily crush them by representing them at the Horde as rebels. Such an accusation would cause the accused to be summoned before the Supreme Tribunal, where the procedure was extremely summary, and the Grand Prince had always the means of obtaining a decision in his own favour.

Of the Princes who strove in this way to increase their influence, the most successful were the Grand Princes of Moscow. They were not a chivalrous race, or one with which the severe moralist can sympathise, but they were largely endowed with cunning, tact, and perseverance, and were little hampered by conscientious scruples. Having early discovered that the liberal distribution of money at the Mongol court was the surest means of gaining favour, they lived parsimoniously at home and spent their savings at the Horde. To secure the continuance of the favour thus acquired, they were ready to form matrimonial alliances with the Khan's family, and to act zealously as his lieutenants. When Novgorod, the haughty, turbulent Republic, refused to pay the yearly tribute, they quelled the insurrection and punished the leaders; and when the inhabitants of Tver rose against the Khan's authority and compelled their Prince to make common cause with them, the wily Muscovite hastened to the Mongol court and received from the Khan the revolted principality, with 50,000 horsemen to support his authority.

Thus those cunning Moscow Princes "loved the Mongols beyond measure" so long as the Khan was irresistibly powerful, but as his power waned they stood forth as his rivals. When the Golden Horde, like the great Empire of which it had once formed a part, fell to pieces in the fifteenth century, these ambitious Princes read the signs of the times, and put themselves at the head of the liberation movement, which was at first unsuccessful, but ultimately freed the country from the hated yoke.

From this brief sketch of the Mongol domination the reader will readily understand that it did not leave any deep,

lasting impression on the people. The invaders never settled in Russia Proper, and never amalgamated with the native population. So long as they retained their semi-pagan, semi-Buddhistic religion, a certain number of their notables became Christians and were absorbed by the Russian Noblesse; but as soon as the Horde adopted Islam, this movement was arrested. There was no blending of the two races such as has taken place—and is still taking place—between the Russian peasantry and the Finnish tribes of the North. The Russians remained Christians, and the Mongols remained Mahometans; and this difference of religion raised an impassable barrier between the two nationalities.

It must, however, be admitted that the Mongol domination, though it had little influence on the life and habits of the people, had a considerable influence on the political development of the nation. At the time of the conquest Russia was composed of a large number of independent principalities, all governed by descendants of Rurik. As these principalities were not geographical or ethnographical units, but mere artificial, arbitrarily defined districts, which were regularly subdivided or combined according to the hereditary rights of the Princes, it is highly probable that they would in any case have been sooner or later united under one sceptre; but it is quite certain that the policy of the Khans helped to accelerate this unification and to create the autocratic power which has since been wielded by the Tsars. If the principalities had been united without foreign interference, we should probably have found in the united State some form of political organisation corresponding to that which existed in the component parts—some mixed form of government, in which the political power would have been more or less equally divided between the Tsar and the people. The Mongol rule interrupted this normal development by extinguishing all free political life. The first Tsars of Muscovy were the political descendants, not of the old independent Princes, but of the Mongol Khans. It may be said, therefore, that the autocratic power, which has been during the last four centuries out of all comparison the most important factor in Russian history, was in a certain sense created by the Mongol domination.

CHAPTER XV

THE COSSACKS

No sooner had the Grand Princes of Moscow thrown off the Mongol yoke and become independent Tsars of Muscovy than they began that eastward territorial expansion which has gone on steadily till our own time, and which culminated in the occupation of Port Arthur. Ivan the Terrible conquered the Khanates of Kazán and Astrakhan (1552-54) and reduced to nominal subjection the Bashkir and Kirghiz tribes in the vicinity of the Volga, but he did not thereby establish law and order on the Steppe. The lawless tribes retained their old pastoral mode of life and predatory habits, and harassed the Russian agricultural population of the outlying provinces in the same way as the Red Indians in America used to harass the white colonists of the Far West. A large section of the Horde, inhabiting the Crimea and the Steppe to the north of the Black Sea, escaped annexation by submitting to the Ottoman Turks and becoming tributaries of the Sultan.

The Turks were at that time a formidable power, with which the Tsars of Muscovy were too weak to cope successfully, and the Khan of the Crimea could always, when hard pressed by his northern neighbours, obtain assistance from Constantinople. This potentate exercised a nominal authority over the pastoral tribes which roamed on the Steppe between the Crimea and the Russian frontier, but he had neither the power nor the desire to control their aggressive tendencies. Their raids in Russian and Polish territory ensured, among other advantages, a regular and plentiful supply of slaves, which formed the chief article of export from Kaffa—the modern Theodosia—and from the other seaports of the southern coast.

Of this slave trade, which flourished down to 1783, when the Crimea was finally conquered and annexed by Russia,

we have a graphic account by an eye-witness, a Lithuanian traveller of the sixteenth century. "Ships from Asia," he says, "bring arms, clothes, and horses to the Crimean Tartars, and start on the homeward voyage laden with slaves. It is for this kind of merchandise alone that the Crimean markets are noteworthy. Slaves may be always had for sale as a pledge or as a present, and everyone rich enough to have a horse deals in them. If a man wishes to buy clothes, arms, or horses, and does not happen to have at the moment any slaves, he takes on credit the articles required, and makes a formal promise to deliver at a given term a certain number of people of our blood—being convinced that he can get by that time the requisite number. And these promises are always accurately fulfilled, as if those who made them had always a supply of our people in their courtyards. A Jewish money-changer, sitting at the gate of Tauris and seeing constantly the countless multitude of our countrymen led in as captives, asked us whether there still remained any people in our land, and whence came such a multitude of them. The stronger of these captives, branded on the forehead and the cheeks and manacled or fettered, are tortured by severe labour all day, and are shut up in dark cells at night. They are kept alive by small quantities of food, composed chiefly of the flesh of animals that have died—putrid, covered with maggots, disgusting even to dogs. Women, who are more tender, are treated in a different fashion; some of them who can sing and play are employed to amuse the guests at festivals.

"When the slaves are led out for sale they walk to the market-place in single file, like storks on the wing, in whole dozens, chained together by the neck, and are there sold by auction. The auctioneer shouts loudly that they are 'the newest arrivals, simple, and not cunning, lately captured from the people of the kingdom (Poland), and not from Muscovy'; for the Muscovite race, being crafty and deceitful, does not bring a good price. This kind of merchandise is appraised with great accuracy in the Crimea, and is bought by foreign merchants at a high price, in order to be sold at a still higher rate to blacker nations, such as Saracens, Persians, Indians, Arabs, Syrians, and Assyrians. When

a purchase is made the teeth are examined, to see that they are neither few nor discoloured. At the same time the more hidden parts of the body are carefully inspected, and if a mole, excrescence, wound, or other latent defect is discovered, the bargain is rescinded. But notwithstanding these investigations the cunning slave-dealers and brokers succeed in cheating the buyers; for when they have valuable boys and girls, they do not at once produce them, but first fatten them, clothe them in silk, and put powder and rouge on their cheeks, so as to sell them at a better price. Sometimes beautiful and perfect maidens of our nation bring their weight in gold. This takes place in all the towns of the peninsula, but especially in Kaffa."*

To protect the agricultural population of the Steppe against the raids of these thieving, cattle-lifting, kidnapping neighbours, the Tsars of Muscovy and the Kings of Poland built forts, constructed palisades, dug trenches, and kept up a regular military cordon. The troops composing this cordon were called Cossacks; but these were not the "Free Cossacks" best known to history and romance. These latter lived beyond the frontier on the debatable land which lay between the two hostile races, and there they formed self-governing military communities. Each one of the rivers flowing southwards—the Dnieper, the Don, the Volga, and the Yaïk or Ural—was held by a community of these Free Cossacks, and no one, whether Christian or Mahometan, was allowed to pass through their territory without their permission.

Officially the Free Cossacks were Russians, for they professed to be champions of Orthodox Christianity, and —with the exception of those of the Dnieper—loyal subjects of the Tsar, but in reality they were something different. Though they were Russian by origin, language, and sympathy, the habit of kidnapping Tartar women introduced among them a certain admixture of Tartar blood. Though self-constituted champions of Christianity and haters of Islam, they troubled themselves very little with religion, and did not submit to the ecclesiastical authorities. As to

* Michalonis Litvani, "De moribus Tartarorum Fragmina." X., Basiliæ, 1615.

their political status, it cannot be easily defined. Whilst professing allegiance and devotion to the Tsar, they did not think it necessary to obey him, except in so far as his orders suited their own convenience. And the Tsar, it must be confessed, acted towards them in a similar fashion. When he found it convenient he called them his faithful subjects; and when complaints were made to him about their raids on Turkish territory, he declared that they were not his subjects, but runaways and brigands, and that the Sultan might punish them as he thought fit. At the same time, the so-called runaways and brigands regularly received supplies and ammunition from Moscow, as is amply proved by recently published documents. Down to the middle of the seventeenth century the Cossacks of the Dnieper stood in a similar relation to the Polish kings; but at that time they threw off their allegiance to Poland, and became subjects of the Tsars of Muscovy.

Of these semi-independent military communities, which formed a continuous barrier along the southern and south-eastern frontier, the most celebrated were the Zaporovians * of the Dnieper and the Cossacks of the Don.

The Zaporovian Commonwealth has been compared sometimes to ancient Sparta, and sometimes to the mediæval Military Orders, but it had in reality quite a different character. In Sparta the nobles kept in subjection a large population of slaves, and were themselves constantly under the severe discipline of the magistrates. These Cossacks of the Dnieper, on the contrary, lived by fishing, hunting, and marauding, and knew nothing of discipline, except in time of war. Amongst all the inhabitants of the *Setch*—so the fortified camp was called—there reigned the most perfect equality. The common saying, "Bear patiently, Cossack; you will one day be Atamán!" was often realised; for every year the office-bearers laid down the insignia of office in presence of the general assembly, and, after thanking the brotherhood for the honour they had enjoyed, retired to their former position of common Cossack. At the election

* The name "Zaporovians," by which they are known in the West, is a corruption of the Russian word *Zaporoshtsi*, which means "Those who live beyond the Rapids."

which followed this ceremony, any member might be chosen chief of his *kurén,* or company, and any chief of a *kurén* might be chosen *Atamán.*

The comparison of these bold Borderers with the mediæval Military Orders is scarcely less forced. They call themselves, indeed, *Lytsars*—a corruption of the Russian word *Ritsar,* which is in its turn a corruption of the German *Ritter*—talked of knightly honour (*lýtsarskaya tchest'*), and sometimes proclaimed themselves the champions of Greek Orthodoxy against the Roman Catholicism of the Poles and the Mahometanism of the Tartars; but religion occupied in their minds a very secondary place. Their great object in life was the acquisition of booty. To attain this object they lived in intermittent warfare with the Tartars, lifted their cattle, pillaged their *aouls,* swept the Black Sea in flotillas of small boats, and occasionally sacked important coast towns, such as Varna and Sinope. When Tartar booty could not be easily obtained, they turned their attention to the Slavonic populations; and when hard pressed by Christian potentates, they did not hesitate to put themselves under the protection of the Sultan.

The Cossacks of the Don, of the Volga, and of the Ural had a somewhat different organisation. They had no fortified camp like the *Setch,* but lived in villages, and assembled as necessity demanded. As they were completely beyond the sphere of Polish influence, they knew nothing about "knightly honour" and similar conceptions of Western chivalry; they even adopted many Tartar customs, and loved in time of peace to strut about in gorgeous Tartar costumes. Besides this, they were nearly all emigrants from Great Russia, and mostly Old Ritualists or Sectarians, whilst the Zaporovians were Little Russians and Orthodox.

These military communities rendered valuable service to Russia. The best means of protecting the southern frontier was to have as allies a large body of men leading the same kind of life and capable of carrying on the same kind of warfare as the nomadic marauders; and such a body of men were the Free Cossacks. The sentiment of self-preservation and the desire of booty kept them constantly on the alert. By sending out small parties in all directions, by

"procuring tongues"—that is to say, by kidnapping and torturing straggling Tartars with a view to extracting information from them—and by keeping spies in the enemy's territory, they were generally apprised beforehand of any intended incursion. When danger threatened, the ordinary precautions were redoubled. Day and night patrols kept watch at the points where the enemy was expected, and as soon as sure signs of his approach were discovered a pile of tarred barrels prepared for the purpose was fired to give the alarm. Rapidly the signal was repeated at one point of observation after another, and by this primitive system of telegraphy in the course of a few hours the whole district was up in arms. If the invaders were not too numerous, they were at once attacked and driven back. If they could not be successfully resisted, they were allowed to pass; but a troop of Cossacks was sent to pillage their *aouls* in their absence, whilst another and larger force was collected, in order to intercept them when they were returning home laden with booty. Thus many a nameless battle was fought on the trackless Steppe, and many brave men fell unhonoured and unsung—

"Illacrymabiles
Urgentur ignotique longa
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro."

Notwithstanding these valuable services, the Cossack communities were a constant source of diplomatic difficulties and political dangers. As they paid very little attention to the orders of the Government, they supplied the Sultan with any number of *casus belli*, and were often ready to turn their arms against the power to which they professed allegiance. During "the troublous times," for example, when the Tsardom of Muscovy was wellnigh destroyed by civil strife and foreign invasion, they overran the country, robbing, pillaging, and burning as they were wont to do in the Tartar *aouls*. At a later period the Don Cossacks twice raised formidable insurrections—first under Stenka Razin (1670), and secondly under Pugatchév (1773)—and during the war between Peter the Great and Charles XII. of Sweden the Zaporovians took the side of the Swedish king.

The Government naturally strove to put an end to this

danger, and ultimately succeeded. All the Cossacks were deprived of their independence, but the fate of the various communities was different. Those of the Volga were transferred to the Terek, where they had abundant occupation in guarding the frontier against the incursions of the Eastern Caucasian tribes. The Zaporovians held tenaciously to their "Dnieper liberties," and resisted all interference, till they were forcibly disbanded in the time of Catherine II. The majority of them fled to Turkey, where some of their descendants are still to be found, and the remainder were settled on the Kubán, where they could lead their old life by carrying on an irregular warfare with the tribes of the Western Caucasus. Since the capture of Shamyl and the pacification of the Caucasus, this Cossack population of the Kubán and the Terek, extending in an unbroken line from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian, have been able to turn their attention to peaceful pursuits, and now raise large quantities of wheat for exportation; but they still retain their martial bearing, and some of them regret the good old times when a brush with the Circassians was an ordinary occurrence and the work of tilling the soil was often diversified with a more exciting kind of occupation.

The Cossacks of the Ural and the Don have been allowed to remain in their old homes, but they have been deprived of their independence and self-government, and their social organisation has been completely changed. The boisterous popular assemblies which formerly decided all public affairs have been abolished, and the custom of choosing the *Atamán* and other office-bearers by popular election has been replaced by a system of regular promotion, according to rules elaborated in St. Petersburg. The officers and their families now compose a kind of hereditary aristocracy, which has succeeded in appropriating, by means of Imperial grants, a large portion of the land which was formerly common property.

As the Empire expanded in Asia, the system of protecting the frontier by Cossack colonists was extended eastwards, so that now there is a belt of Cossack territory stretching almost without interruption from the banks of the Don to the coast of the Pacific. It is divided into eleven sections,

in each of which is settled a Cossack corps with a separate administration.

When universal military service was introduced in 1874, the Cossacks were very little affected by the new law. In order to preserve their military traditions and habits they were allowed to retain, with certain modifications, their old organisation, rights and privileges. In return for a large amount of fertile land and exemption from direct taxation, they have to equip themselves at their own expense, and are liable to serve for twenty years, of which three are usually spent in preparatory training, twelve in the active army, and five in the reserve. This system gives to the army a contingent of about 330,000 men—divided into 890 squadrons and 108 infantry companies—with 236 guns.

The Cossacks in active service are to be met with in all parts of the Empire, from the Prussian to the Chinese frontier. In the Asiatic Provinces their services are invaluable. Capable of enduring an incredible amount of fatigue and all manner of privations, they can live and thrive in conditions which would soon disable regular troops. The capacity of self-adaptation, which is characteristic of the Russian people generally, is possessed by them in the highest degree. When placed on some distant Asiatic frontier they can at once transform themselves into squatters—building their own house, raising crops of grain, and living as colonists without neglecting their military duties.

I have sometimes heard it asserted by military men that the Cossack organisation is an antiquated institution, and that the soldiers which it produces, however useful they may be in Central Asia, would be of little service in regular European warfare. Whether this view, which received some confirmation in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, is true or false I cannot pretend to say, for it is a subject on which a civilian has no right to speak, but I may remark that the Cossacks themselves are not by any means of that opinion. They regard themselves as the most valuable troops which the Tsar possesses, believing themselves capable of performing anything within the bounds of human possibility, and a good deal that lies beyond that limit. More than once Don Cossacks have assured me that if the Tsar had allowed

them to fit out a flotilla of small boats during the Crimean War they would have captured the British fleet, as their ancestors used to capture Turkish galleys on the Black Sea!

In old times, throughout the whole territory of the Don Cossacks, agriculture was prohibited on pain of death. It is generally supposed that this measure was adopted with a view to preserve the martial spirit of the inhabitants, but it may be explained otherwise. The great majority of the Cossacks, averse to all regular, laborious occupations, wished to live by fishing, hunting, cattle-breeding, and marauding, but there was always amongst them a considerable number of immigrants—runaway serfs from the interior—who had been accustomed to live by agriculture. These latter wished to raise crops on the fertile virgin soil, and if they had been allowed to do so they would have to some extent spoiled the pastures. We have here, I believe, the true reason for the above-mentioned prohibition, and this view is strongly confirmed by analogous facts which I have observed in another locality. In the Kirghiz territory the poorer inhabitants of the *aouls* near the frontier, having few or no cattle, wish to let part of the common land to the neighbouring Russian peasantry for agricultural purposes; but the richer inhabitants, who possess flocks and herds, strenuously oppose this movement, and would doubtless prohibit it under pain of death if they had the power, because all agricultural encroachments diminish the pasture-land.

Whatever was the real reason of the prohibition, practical necessity proved in the long run too strong for the anti-agriculturists. As the population augmented and the opportunities for marauding decreased, the majority had to overcome their repugnance to husbandry; and soon large patches of ploughed land or waving grain were to be seen in the vicinity of the *stanitsas*, as the Cossack villages are termed. At first there was no attempt to regulate this new use of the *ager publicus*. Each Cossack who wished to raise a crop ploughed and sowed wherever he thought fit, and retained as long as he chose the land thus appropriated; and when the soil began to show signs of exhaustion, he abandoned his plot and ploughed elsewhere. But this unregulated use of the Communal property could not long continue. As the

number of agriculturists increased, quarrels frequently arose, and sometimes terminated in bloodshed. Still worse evils appeared when markets were created in the vicinity, and it became possible to sell the grain for exportation. In some *stanitsas* the richer families appropriated enormous quantities of the common land by using several teams of oxen, or by hiring peasants in the nearest villages to come and plough for them; and instead of abandoning the land after raising two or three crops they retained possession of it, and came to regard it as their private property. Thus the whole of the arable land, or at least the best part of it, became actually, if not legally, the private property of a few families, whilst the less energetic or less fortunate inhabitants of the *stanitsa* had only parcels of comparatively barren soil, or had no land whatever, and became mere agricultural labourers.

After a time this injustice was remedied. The landless members justly complained that they had to bear the same burdens as those who possessed the land, and that therefore they ought to enjoy the same privileges. The old spirit of equality was still strong amongst them, and they ultimately succeeded in asserting their rights. In accordance with their demands the appropriated land was confiscated by the Communes, and the system of periodical re-distributions was introduced. By this system each adult male possesses a share of the land.

These facts tend to throw light on some of the dark questions of social development in its early stages.

So long as a village community leads a purely pastoral life, and possesses an abundance of land, there is no reason why the individuals or the families of which it is composed should divide the land into private lots, and there are very potent reasons why they should not adopt such a course. To give the division of the land any practical significance, it would be necessary to raise fences of some kind, and these fences, requiring for their construction a certain amount of labour, would prove merely a useless encumbrance, for it is much more convenient that all the sheep and cattle should graze together. If there is a scarcity of pasture, and consequently a conflict of interest among the families, the enjoyment of the common land will be regulated not by raising

fences, but by simply limiting the number of sheep and cattle which each family is entitled to put upon the pasturage, as is done in many Russian villages at the present day. When anyone desires to keep more sheep and cattle than the maximum to which he is entitled, he pays to the others a certain compensation. Thus, we see, in pastoral life the dividing of the common land is unnecessary and inexpedient, and consequently private property in land is not likely to come into existence.

With the introduction of agriculture appears a tendency to divide the land among the families composing the community, for each family living by husbandry requires a definite portion of the soil. If the land suitable for agricultural purposes be plentiful, each head of a family may be allowed to take possession of as much of it as he requires, as was formely done in the Cossack *stanitsas;* if, on the contrary, the area of arable land is small, as is the case in some Bashkir *aouls,* there will probably be a regular allotment of it among the families.

With the tendency to divide the land into definite portions arises a conflict between the principle of communal and the principle of private property. Those who obtain definite portions of the soil are in general likely to keep them and transmit them to their descendants. In a country, however, like the Steppe—and it is only of such countries that I am at present speaking—the nature of the soil and the system of agriculture militate against this conversion of simple possession into a right of property. A plot of land is commonly cultivated for only three or four years in succession. It is then abandoned for at least double that period, and the cultivators remove to some other portion of the communal territory. After a time, it is true, they return to the old portion, which has been in the meantime lying fallow; but as the soil is tolerably equal in quality, the families or individuals have little reason to desire the precise plots which they formerly possessed. Under such circumstances the principle of private property in the land is not likely to strike root; each family insists on possessing a certain *quantity* rather than a certain *plot* of land, and contents itself with a right of usufruct, whilst the right of property remains in

the hands of the Commune; and it must not be forgotten that the difference between usufruct and property is here of great practical importance, for so long as the Commune retains the right of property it may re-allot the land in any way it thinks fit.

As the population increases and land becomes less plentiful, the primitive method of agriculture above alluded to gives place to a less primitive method, commonly known as "the three-field system," according to which the cultivators do not migrate periodically from one part of the communal territory to another, but till always the same fields, and are obliged to manure the plots which they occupy. The principle of communal property rarely survives this change, for by long possession the families acquire a prescriptive right to the portions which they cultivate, and those who manure their land will naturally object to exchange it for land which has been held by indolent, improvident neighbours. In Russia, however, this change has not destroyed the principle of communal property. Though the three-field system has been in use for many generations in the central provinces, the communal principle, with its periodical re-allotment of the land, has not yet disappeared.

For the student of sociology, the past history and actual condition of the Don Cossacks present many other features equally interesting and instructive. He may there see, for instance, how an aristocracy can be created by military promotion, and how serfage may originate and become a recognised institution without any legislative enactment. If he takes an interest in peculiar manifestations of religious thought and feeling, he will find a rich field of investigation in the countless religious sects; and if he is a collector of quaint old customs, he will not lack occupation.

One curious custom, which has very recently died out, I may here mention by way of illustration. As the Cossacks knew very little about land-surveying, and still less about land registration, the precise boundary between two contiguous *yurts*—as the communal land of a *stanitsa* was called—was often a matter of uncertainty and a fruitful source of disputes. When the boundary was once determined, the following method of registering it was employed. All the

boys of the two *stanitsas* were collected and driven in a body like sheep to the intervening frontier. The whole population then walked along the frontier that had been agreed upon, and at each landmark a number of boys were soundly whipped and allowed to run home! This was done in the hope that the victims would remember, as long as they lived, the spot where they had received their unmerited castigation.* The device, I have been assured, was generally very effective, but it was not always quite successful. Whether from the castigation not being sufficiently severe, or from some other defect in the method, it sometimes happened that disputes afterwards arose, and the whipped boys, now grown up to manhood, gave conflicting testimony. When such a case occurred the following expedient was adopted. One of the oldest inhabitants was chosen as arbiter, and made to swear on the Scriptures that he would act honestly to the best of his knowledge; then, taking an Icon in his hand, he walked along what he believed to be the old frontier. Whether he made mistakes or not, his decision was accepted by both parties and regarded as final. This custom existed in some *stanitsas* down to the year 1850, when the boundaries were clearly determined by Government officials.

* A custom of this kind, I am told, existed not very long ago in England, and is still spoken of as "the beating of the bounds."

CHAPTER XVI

FOREIGN COLONISTS ON THE STEPPE

In European Russia the struggle between agriculture and nomadic barbarism is now a thing of the past, and the fertile Steppe, which was for centuries a battle-ground of the Aryan and Turanian races, has been incorporated into the dominions of the Tsar. The nomadic tribes have been partly driven out and partly pacified and parked in "reserves," and most of the territory which they so long and so stubbornly defended is now studded with peaceful villages and tilled by laborious agriculturists.

In traversing this region the ordinary tourist will find little to interest him. He will see nothing which he can possibly dignify by the name of scenery, and he may journey on for many days without having any occasion to make an entry in his notebook. If he should happen, however, to be an ethnologist and linguist, he may find occupation, for he will here meet with fragments of many different races and a variety of foreign tongues.

This ethnological variety is the result of a policy inaugurated by Catherine II. So long as the southern frontier was pushed forward slowly, the acquired territory was regularly filled up by Russian peasants from the central provinces who were anxious to obtain more land and more liberty than they enjoyed in their native villages; but during "the glorious age of Catherine" the frontier was pushed forward so rapidly that the old method of spontaneous emigration no longer sufficed to people the annexed territory. The Empress had recourse, therefore, to organised emigration from foreign countries. Her diplomatic representatives in Western Europe tried to induce artisans and peasants to emigrate to Russia, and special agents were sent to various countries to supplement the efforts of the diplomatists. Thousands accepted the invitation, and were for the most

part settled on the land which had been recently the pasture-ground of the nomadic hordes.

This policy was adopted by succeeding sovereigns, and the consequence of it has been that Southern Russia now contains a variety of races such as is to be found, perhaps, nowhere else in Europe. The official statistics of New Russia alone—that is to say, the provinces of Ekaterinosláv, Tauride, Kherson, and Bessarabia—enumerate the following nationalities: Great Russians, Little Russians, Poles, Servians, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Moldavians, Germans, English, Swedes, Swiss, French, Italians, Greeks, Armenians, Tartars, Mordwá, Jews, and Gypsies. The religions are almost equally numerous. The statistics speak of Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Gregorians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Mennonites, Separatists, Pietists, Karaïm Jews, Talmudists, Mahometans, and numerous Russian sects, such as the Molokánye and the Skoptsi or Eunuchs. America herself could scarcely show a more motley list in her statistics of population.

It is but fair to state that the above list, though literally correct, does not give a true idea of the actual population. The great body of the inhabitants are Russian and Orthodox, whilst several of the nationalities named are represented by a small number of souls—some of them, such as the French, being found exclusively in the towns. Still, the variety even in the rural population is very great. Once, in the space of three days, and using only the most primitive means of conveyance, I visited colonies of Greeks, Germans, Servians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, and Jews.

Of all the foreign colonists the Germans are by far the most numerous. The object of the Government in inviting them to settle in the country was that they should till the unoccupied land and thereby increase the national wealth, and that they should at the same time exercise a civilising influence on the Russian peasantry in their vicinity. In this latter respect they have totally failed to fulfil their mission. A Russian village, situated in the midst of German colonies, shows generally, so far as I could observe, no signs of German influence. Each nationality lives *more majorum*, and holds as little communication as possible with the

other. The muzhik observes carefully—for he is very curious—the mode of life of his more advanced neighbours, but he never thinks of adopting it. He looks upon Germans almost as beings of a different world—as a wonderfully cunning and ingenious people, who have been endowed by Providence with peculiar qualities not possessed by ordinary Orthodox humanity. To him it seems in the nature of things that Germans should live in large, clean, well-built houses, in the same way as it is in the nature of things that birds should build nests; and as it has probably never occurred to a human being to build a nest for himself and his family, so it never occurs to a Russian peasant to build a house on the German model. Germans are Germans, and Russians are Russians—and there is nothing more to be said on the subject.

This stubbornly conservative spirit of the peasantry who live in the neighbourhood of Germans seems to give the lie direct to the oft-repeated and universally believed assertion that Russians are an imitative people strongly disposed to adopt the manners and customs of any foreigners with whom they may come in contact. The Russian, it is said, changes his nationality as easily as he changes his coat, and derives great satisfaction from wearing some nationality that does not belong to him; but here we have an important fact which appears to prove the contrary.

The truth is that in this matter we must distinguish between the Noblesse and the peasantry. The nobles are singularly prone to adopt foreign manners, customs, and institutions; the peasants, on the contrary, are as a rule decidedly conservative. It must not, however, be supposed that this proceeds from a difference of race; the difference is to be explained by the past history of the two classes. Like all other peoples, the Russians are strongly conservative so long as they remain in what may be termed their primitive moral habitat—that is to say, so long as external circumstances do not force them out of their accustomed traditional groove. The Noblesse were long ago violently forced out of their old groove by the reforming Tsars, and since that time they have been so constantly driven hither and thither by foreign influences that they have never been

able to form a new one. Thus they easily enter upon any new path which seems to them profitable or attractive. The great mass of the people, on the contrary, too heavy to be thus lifted out of the guiding influence of custom and tradition, are still animated with a strongly conservative spirit.

In confirmation of this view I may mention two facts which have often attracted my attention. The first is that the Molokánye—a primitive Evangelical sect of which I shall speak at length in the next chapter—succumb gradually to German influence; by becoming heretics in religion they free themselves from one of the strongest bonds attaching them to the past, and soon become heretics in things secular. The second fact is that the individual Orthodox peasant, when placed by circumstances in some new sphere of activity, readily adopts whatever seems profitable. Take, for example, the peasants who abandon agriculture and embark in industrial enterprises; finding themselves, as it were, in a new world, in which their old traditional notions are totally inapplicable, they have no hesitation in adopting foreign ideas and foreign inventions. And when once they have chosen this new path, they are much more "go-ahead" than the Germans. Freed alike from the trammels of hereditary conceptions and from the prudence which experience generates, they often give a loose rein to their impulsive character, and enter freely on the wildest speculations.

The marked contrast presented by a German colony and a Russian village in close proximity with each other is often used to illustrate the superiority of the Teutonic over the Slavonic race, and in order to make the contrast more striking, the Mennonite colonies are generally taken as the representatives of the Germans. Without entering here on the general question, I must say that this method of argumentation is scarcely fair. The Mennonites, who formerly lived in the neighbourhood of Danzig and emigrated from Prussia in order to escape the military conscription, brought with them to their new home a large store of useful technical knowledge and a considerable amount of capital, and they received a quantity of land very much greater than the Russian peasants possess. Besides

this, they enjoyed until very recently several valuable privileges. They were entirely exempted from military service and almost entirely exempted from taxation. Altogether their lines fell in very pleasant places. In material and moral well-being they stand as far above the majority of the ordinary German colonists as these latter do above their Russian neighbours. Even in the richest districts of Germany their prosperity would attract attention. To compare these rich, privileged, well-educated farmers with the poor, heavily taxed, uneducated peasantry, and to draw from the comparison conclusions concerning the capabilities of the two races, is a proceeding so absurd that it requires no further comment.

To the wearied traveller who has been living for some time in Russian villages, one of these Mennonite colonies seems an earthly paradise. In a little hollow, perhaps by the side of a watercourse, he suddenly comes on a long row of high-roofed houses half concealed in trees. The trees may be found on closer inspection to be little better than mere saplings; but after a long journey on the bare Steppe, where there is neither tree nor bush of any kind, the foliage, scant as it is, appears singularly inviting. The houses are large, well arranged, and kept in such thoroughly good repair that they always appear to be newly built. The rooms are plainly furnished, without any pretensions to elegance, but scrupulously clean. Adjoining the house are the stable and byre, which would not disgrace a model farm in Germany or England. In front is a spacious courtyard, which has the appearance of being swept several times a day, and behind there is a garden well stocked with vegetables. Fruit trees and flowers are not very plentiful, for the climate is not favourable to them.

The inhabitants are honest, frugal folk, somewhat sluggish of intellect and indifferent to things lying beyond the narrow limits of their own little world, but shrewd enough in all matters which they deem worthy of their attention. If you arrive amongst them as a stranger you may be a little chilled by the welcome you receive, for they are exclusive, reserved, and distrustful, and do not much like to associate with those who do not belong to their own

sect; but if you can converse with them in their mother tongue and talk about religious matters in an evangelical tone, you may easily overcome their stiffness and exclusiveness. Altogether such a village cannot be recommended for a lengthened sojourn, for the severe order and symmetry which everywhere prevail would soon prove irksome to anyone having no Dutch blood in his veins;* but as a temporary resting-place during a pilgrimage on the Steppe, when the pilgrim is longing for a little cleanliness and comfort, it is very agreeable.

The fact that these Mennonites and some other German colonies have succeeded in rearing a few sickly trees has suggested to some fertile minds the idea that the prevailing dryness of the climate, which is the chief difficulty with which the agriculturist of that region has to contend, might be to some extent counteracted by arboriculture on a large scale. This scheme, though it has been seriously entertained by one of his Majesty's ministers, must seem hardly practicable to anyone who knows how much labour and money the colonists have expended in creating that agreeable shade which they love to enjoy in their leisure hours. If climate is affected at all by the existence or non-existence of forests —a point on which scientific men do not seem to be entirely agreed—any palpable increase of the rainfall can be produced only by forests of enormous extent, and it is hardly conceivable that these could be artificially produced in Southern Russia. It is quite possible, however, that local ameliorations may be effected. During a visit to the province of Voronezh in 1903 I found that comparatively small plantations diminished the effects of drought in their immediate vicinity by retaining the moisture for a time in the soil and the surrounding atmosphere.

After the Mennonites and other Germans, the Bulgarian colonists deserve a passing notice. They settled in this region much more recently, on the land that was left vacant

* The Mennonites were originally Dutchmen. Persecuted for their religious views in the sixteenth century, a large number of them accepted an invitation to settle in West Prussia, where they helped to drain the great marshes between Danzig, Elbing, and Marienburg. Here in the course of time they forgot their native language. Their emigration to Russia began in 1789.

by the exodus of the Nogaï Tartars after the Crimean War. If I may judge of their condition by a mere flying visit, I should say that in agriculture and domestic civilisation they are not very far behind the majority of German colonists. The houses are indeed small—so small that one of them might almost be put into a single room of a Mennonite's house; but there is an air of cleanliness and comfort about them that would do credit to a German housewife.

In spite of all this, these Bulgarians were, I could easily perceive, by no means delighted with their new home. The cause of their discontent, so far as I could gather from the few laconic remarks which I extracted from them, seemed to be this. Trusting to the highly coloured descriptions furnished by the emigration agents who had induced them to change the rule of the Sultan for the authority of the Tsar, they came to Russia with the expectation of finding a fertile and beautiful Promised Land. Instead of a land flowing with milk and honey, they received a tract of bare Steppe on which even water could be obtained only with great difficulty—with no shade to protect them from the heat of summer and nothing to shelter them from the keen northern blasts that often sweep over those open plains. As no adequate arrangements had been made for their reception, they were quartered during the first winter on the German colonists, who, being quite innocent of any Slavophil sympathies, were probably not very hospitable to their uninvited guests. To complete their disappointment, they found that they could not cultivate the vine, and that their mild, fragrant tobacco, which is for them a necessary of life, could be obtained only at a very high price. So disconsolate were they under this cruel disenchantment that, at the time of my visit, they talked of returning to their old homes in Turkey.

As an example of the less prosperous colonists, I may mention the Tartar-speaking Greeks in the neighbourhood of Mariúpol, on the northern shore of the Sea of Azof. Their ancestors lived in the Crimea, under the rule of the Tartar Khans, and emigrated to Russia in the time of Catherine II., before Crim Tartary was annexed to the Russian Empire. They have almost entirely forgotten their

old language, but have preserved their old faith. In adopting the Tartar language they have adopted something of Tartar indolence and apathy, and the natural consequence is that they are poor and ignorant.

But of all [redacted] of this region the least prosperous are the Jews. The Chosen People are certainly a most intelligent, industrious, frugal race, and in all matters of buying, selling, and bartering they are unrivalled among the nations of the earth, but they have been too long accustomed to town life to be good tillers of the soil. These Jewish colonies were founded as an experiment to see whether the Israelite could be weaned from his traditionary pursuits and transferred to what some economists call the productive section of society. The experiment has failed, and the cause of the failure is not difficult to find. One has merely to look at these men of gaunt visage and shambling gait, with their loop-holed slippers, and black, threadbare coats reaching down to their ankles, to understand that they are not in their proper sphere. Their houses are in a most dilapidated condition, and their villages remind one of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet. A great part of their land is left uncultivated or let to colonists of a different race. What little revenue they have is derived chiefly from trade of a more or less clandestine nature.*

As Scandinavia was formerly called *officina gentium*—a workshop in which new nations were made—so we may regard Southern Russia as a workshop in which fragments are being melted down to form a new, composite whole. It must be confessed, however, that the melting process has as yet scarcely begun.

National peculiarities are not obliterated so rapidly in Russia as in America or in British colonies. Among the German colonists in Russia the process of assimilation is hardly perceptible. Though their fathers and grandfathers may have been born in the new country, they would consider it an insult to be called Russians. They look down

* Mr. Arnold White, who subsequently visited some of these Jewish colonies in connection with Baron Hirsch's colonisation scheme, assured me that he found them in a much more prosperous condition.

upon the Russian peasantry as poor, ignorant, lazy, and dishonest, fear the officials on account of their tyranny and extortion, preserve jealously their own language and customs, rarely speak Russian well [redacted] sometimes not at all —and never intermarry with thos[redacted] they are separated by nationality and reli[redacted] Russian influence acts, however, more rapidly on the Slavonic colonists —Servians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins—who profess the Greek Orthodox faith, learn more easily the Russian language, which is closely allied to their own, have no consciousness of belonging to a *Culturvolk*, and in general possess a nature much more pliable than the Teutonic.

Some years ago the Government attempted to accelerate the fusing process by withdrawing the privileges enjoyed by the colonists, and abolishing the peculiar administration under which they lived. These measures, especially the imposing of universal military service, may perhaps eventually break down the extreme exclusiveness of the Germans, because the youths, while serving in the army, must at least learn the Russian language, and may possibly imbibe something of the Russian spirit; but the immediate effect of the new policy was the reverse of what the Government intended. During the first years of the new regime I often overheard in these colonies bitter complaints of Russian tyranny and uncomplimentary remarks about the Russian national character.

The Mennonites considered themselves specially aggrieved by the so-called reforms. They came to Russia in order to escape military service and with the distinct understanding that they should be exempted from it, and now they were forced to act contrary to the tenets of their religion. This was the ground of complaint which they put forward in the petitions addressed to the Government, but they had at the same time another, and perhaps more important, objection to the changes which were being introduced. The men of the old school felt that they could not long maintain, in the new order of things, that stern Puritanical discipline which protected the young generation against immoral influences and contributed largely to the material welfare of the community. Hence, though the

Government was disposed to make certain concessions to their religious beliefs, hundreds of families sold their property and emigrated to America. The movement, however, did not become general. At present the Russian Mennonites number, male and female, about 50,000, divided into 160 colonies and possessing over 800,000 acres of land.

It is quite possible that under the new system of administration the colonists who profess, in common with the Russians, the Greek Orthodox faith may be rapidly Russianised; but I am convinced that the others will long resist assimilation. Greek Orthodoxy and Protestant sectarianism are so radically different in spirit that their respective votaries are not likely to intermarry; and without intermarriage it is impossible that the two nationalities should blend together.

As an instance of the ethnological curiosities which the traveller may stumble upon unawares in this curious region, I may mention a strange acquaintance I made when travelling on the great plain which stretches from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian. One day I accidentally noticed on my travelling-map the name "Shotlándskaya Kolóniya" (Scottish Colony) near the celebrated baths of Piatigorsk. I was at that moment in Stávropol, a town about eighty miles to the north, and could not gain any satisfactory information as to what this colony was. Some well-informed people assured me that it really was what its name implied, whilst others asserted as confidently that it was simply a small German settlement. To decide the matter I determined to visit the place myself, though it did not lie near my intended route, and I accordingly found myself one morning in the village in question. The first inhabitants whom I encountered were unmistakably German, and they professed to know nothing about the existence of Scotsmen in the locality either at the present or in former times. This was disappointing, and I was about to turn away and drive off, when a young man, who proved to be the schoolmaster, came up, and on hearing what I desired, advised me to consult an old Circassian who lived at the end of the village and was well acquainted with local antiquities. On pro-

ceeding to the house indicated, I found a venerable old man, with fine regular features of the Circassian type, coal-black sparkling eyes, and a long grey beard that would have done honour to a patriarch. To him I explained briefly, in Russian, the object of my visit, and asked whether he knew of any Scotsmen in the district.

"And why do you wish to know?" he replied, in the same language, fixing me with his keen, sparkling eyes.

"Because I am myself a Scotsman, and hoped to find fellow-countrymen here."

Let the reader imagine my astonishment when, in reply to this, he answered, in genuine broad Scotch, "Od, man, I'm a Scotsman tae! My name is John Abercrombie. Did ye never hear tell o' John Abercrombie, the famous Edinburgh doctor?"

I was fairly puzzled by this extraordinary declaration. Dr. Abercrombie's name was familiar to me as that of a medical practitioner and writer on psychology, but I knew that he was long since dead. When I had recovered a little from my surprise, I ventured to remark to the enigmatical personage before me that, though his tongue was certainly Scotch, his face was as certainly Circassian.

"Weel, weel," he replied, evidently enjoying my look of mystification, "you're no' far wrang. I'm a Circassian Scotsman!"

This extraordinary admission did not diminish my perplexity, so I begged my new acquaintance to be a little more explicit, and he at once complied with my request. His long story may be told in a few words:—

In the first years of the last century a band of Scottish missionaries came to Russia for the purpose of converting the Circassian tribes, and received from the Emperor Alexander I. a large grant of land in this place, which was then on the frontier of the Empire. Here they founded a mission, and began the work; but they soon discovered that the surrounding population were not idolaters, but Mussulmans, and consequently impervious to Christianity. In this difficulty they fell on the happy idea of buying Circassian children from their parents in times of famine,

and bringing them up as Christians.* One of these children, purchased about the year 1806, was a little boy called Teoona. As he had been purchased with money subscribed by Dr. Abercrombie, he had received in baptism that gentleman's name, and he considered himself the foster-son of his benefactor. Here was the explanation of the mystery.

Teoona, *alias* Mr. Abercrombie, was a man of more than average intelligence. Besides his native tongue, he spoke English, German, and Russian perfectly; and he assured me that he knew several other languages equally well. His life had been devoted to missionary work, and especially to translating and printing the Scriptures. He had laboured first in Astrakhan, then for four years and a half in Persia —in the service of the Bâle mission—and afterwards for six years in Siberia.

The Scottish mission was suppressed by the Emperor Nicholas about the year 1835, and all the missionaries except two returned home. The son of one of these two (Galloway) was the only genuine Scotsman remaining at the time of my visit. Of the "Circassian Scotsmen" there were several, most of whom had married Germans. The other inhabitants were German colonists from the province of Sarátof, and German was the language commonly spoken in the village.

After hearing so much about foreign colonists, Tartar invaders, and Finnish aborigines, the reader may naturally desire to know the numerical strength of the foreign element. Unfortunately we have no accurate data on this subject, but from a careful examination of the available statistics I am inclined to conclude that it constitutes about one-sixth of the population of European Russia, excluding Poland, Finland, and the Caucasus, and nearly a third of the population of the Empire as a whole.

* The missionaries had no scruples about adopting this practice, because they knew that the Circassian tribes were in the habit of exporting their superfluous children to Constantinople, to be brought up in the Turkish harems.

CHAPTER XVII

AMONG THE HERETICS

WHILST travelling on the Steppe I heard a great deal about a peculiar religious sect called the Molokánye, and I felt interested in them because their religious belief, whatever it was, seemed to have a beneficial influence on their material welfare. Of the same race and placed in the same economic conditions as the Orthodox peasantry around them, they were undoubtedly better housed, better clad, more punctual in the payment of their taxes, and, in a word, more prosperous. All my informants agreed in describing them as quiet, decent, sober people; but regarding their religious doctrines the evidence was vague and contradictory. Some considered them to be Protestants or Lutherans, whilst others believed them to be the last remnants of a curious heretical sect which existed in the early Christian Church.

Desirous of obtaining clearer notions on the subject, I determined to investigate the matter for myself. At first I found this to be no easy task. In the villages through which I passed I found numerous members of the sect, but they all showed a decided repugnance to speak about their religious beliefs. Long accustomed to extortion and persecution at the hands of the Administration, and suspecting me to be a secret agent of the Government, they carefully avoided speaking on any subject beyond the state of the weather and the prospects of the harvest, and replied to my questions on other topics as if they had been standing before a Grand Inquisitor.

A few unsuccessful attempts convinced me that it would be impossible to extract from them their religious beliefs by direct questioning. I adopted, therefore, a different system of tactics. From meagre replies already received I had discovered that their doctrine had at least a superficial resemblance to Presbyterianism, and from former experience

I was aware that the curiosity of intelligent Russian peasants is easily excited by descriptions of foreign countries. On these two facts I based my plan of campaign. When I found a Molokán, or someone whom I suspected to be such, I talked for some time about the weather and the crops, as if I had no ulterior object in view. Having fully discussed this matter, I led the conversation gradually from the weather and crops in Russia to the weather and crops in Scotland, and then passed slowly from Scotch agriculture to the Scotch Presbyterian Church. On nearly every occasion this policy succeeded. When the peasant heard that there was a country where the people interpreted the Scriptures for themselves, had no bishops, and considered the veneration of Icons as idolatry, he invariably listened with profound attention; and when he learned further that in that wonderful country the parishes annually sent deputies to an assembly in which all matters pertaining to the Church were freely and publicly discussed, he almost always gave free expression to his astonishment, and I had to answer a whole volley of questions. "Where is that country?" "Is it to the east, or the west?" "Is it very far away?" "If our Presbyter could only hear all that!"

This last expression was precisely what I wanted, because it gave me an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the Presbyter, or pastor, without seeming to desire it; and I knew that a conversation with that personage, who is always an uneducated peasant like the others, but is generally more intelligent and better acquainted with religious doctrine, would certainly be of use to me. On more than one occasion I spent a great part of the night with a Presbyter, and thereby learned much concerning the religious beliefs and practices of the sect. After these interviews I was sure to be treated with confidence and respect by all the Molokánye in the village, and recommended to the brethren of the faith in the neighbouring villages through which I intended to pass. Several of the more intelligent peasants with whom I spoke advised me strongly to visit Alexandrov-Haï, a village situated on the borders of the Kirghiz Steppe. "We are dark (i.e. ignorant) people here," they were wont to say, "and do not know anything, but in Alexandrov-Haï

you will find those who know the faith, and they will discuss with you." This prediction was fulfilled in a somewhat unexpected way.

When returning some weeks later from a visit to the Kirghiz of the Inner Horde, I arrived one evening at this centre of the Molokán faith and was hospitably received by one of the brotherhood. In conversing casually with my host on religious subjects I expressed to him a desire to find someone well read in Holy Writ and well grounded in the faith, and he promised to do what he could for me in this respect. Next morning he kept his promise with a vengeance. Immediately after the tea-urn had been removed the door of the room was opened and twelve peasants were ushered in! After the customary salutations with these unexpected visitors, my host informed me to my astonishment that his friends had come to have a talk with me about the faith; and without further ceremony he placed before me a folio Bible in the old Slavonic tongue, in order that I might read passages in support of my arguments. As I was not at all prepared to open a formal theological discussion, I felt not a little embarrassed, and I could see that my travelling companions, two Russian friends who cared for none of these things, were thoroughly enjoying my discomfiture. There was, however, no possibility of drawing back. I had asked for an opportunity of having a talk with some of the brethren, and now I had got it in a way that I certainly did not expect. My friends withdrew —"leaving me to my fate," as they whispered to me—and the "talk" began.

My fate was by no means so terrible as had been anticipated, but at first the situation was a little awkward. Neither party had any clear ideas as to what the other desired, and my visitors expected that I was to begin the proceedings. This expectation was quite natural and justifiable, for I had inadvertently invited them to meet me, but I could not make a speech to them, for the best of all reasons —that I did not know what to say. If I told them my real aims, their suspicions would probably be aroused. My usual stratagem of the weather and the crops was wholly inapplicable. For a moment I thought of proposing that a psalm

should be sung as a means of breaking the ice, but I felt that this would give to the meeting a solemnity which I wished to avoid. On the whole it seemed best to begin at once a formal discussion. I told them, therefore, that I had spoken with many of their brethren in various villages, and that I had found what I considered grave errors of doctrine. I could not, for instance, agree with them in their belief that it was unlawful to eat pork. This was perhaps an abrupt way of entering on the subject, but it furnished at least a *locus standi*—something to talk about—and an animated discussion immediately ensued. My opponents first endeavoured to prove their thesis from the New Testament, and when this argument broke down they had recourse to the Pentateuch. From a particular article of the ceremonial law we passed to the broader question as to how far the ceremonial law is still binding, and from this to other points equally important.

If the logic of the peasants was not always unimpeachable, their knowledge of the Scriptures left nothing to be desired. In support of their views they quoted long passages from memory, and whenever I indicated vaguely any text which I needed, they at once supplied it verbatim, so that the big folio Bible served merely as an ornament. Three or four of them seemed to know the whole of the New Testament by heart. The course of our informal debate need not here be described; suffice it to say that, after four hours of uninterrupted conversation, we agreed to differ on questions of detail, and parted from each other without a trace of that ill-feeling which religious discussion commonly engenders. Never have I met men more honest and courteous in debate, more earnest in the search after truth, or more careless of dialectical triumphs, than these simple, uneducated muzhiks. If at one or two points in the discussion a little undue warmth was displayed, I must do my opponents the justice to say that they were not the offending party.

This long discussion, as well as numerous discussions which I had had before and have had since with Molokánye in various parts of the country, confirmed my first impression that their doctrines have a strong resemblance to Presby-

terianism. There is, however, an important difference. Presbyterianism has an ecclesiastical organisation and a written creed, and its doctrines have long since become clearly defined by means of public discussion, polemical literature, and General Assemblies. The Molokánye, on the contrary, have had no means of developing their fundamental principles and formulating their vague religious beliefs into a clearly defined logical system. Their theology is, therefore, still in a half-fluid state, so that it is impossible to predict what form it will ultimately assume. "We have not yet thought about that," I have frequently been told when I inquired about some abstruse doctrine; "we must talk about it at the meeting next Sunday. What is your opinion?" Besides this, their fundamental principles allow great latitude for individual and local differences of opinion. They hold that Holy Writ is the only rule of faith and conduct, but that it must be taken in the spiritual, and not in the literal, sense. As there is no terrestrial authority to which doubtful points can be referred, each individual is free to adopt the interpretation which commends itself to his own judgment. This will no doubt ultimately lead to a variety of sects, and already there is a considerable diversity of opinion between different communities; but this diversity has not yet been recognised, and I may say that I nowhere found that fanatically dogmatic quibbling spirit which is usually the soul of sectarianism.

For their ecclesiastical organisation the Molokánye take as their model the early Apostolic Church, as depicted in the New Testament, and uncompromisingly reject all later authorities. In accordance with this model they have no hierarchy and no paid clergy, but choose from among themselves a Presbyter and two assistants—men well known among the brethren for their exemplary life and their knowledge of the Scriptures—whose duty it is to watch over the religious and moral welfare of the flock. As they have no churches, they hold meetings in private houses, and on Sundays they usually spend two or three hours in psalm-singing, prayer, reading the Scriptures, and friendly conversation on religious subjects. If anyone has a doctrinal difficulty which he desires to have cleared up, he states it

to the congregation, and some of the others give their opinions, with the texts on which the opinions are founded. If the question seems clearly solved by the texts, it is decided; if not, it is left open.

As in many young sects, there exists among the Molokánye a system of severe moral supervision. If a member has been guilty of drunkenness or any act unbecoming a Christian, he is first admonished by the Presbyter in private or before the congregation; and if this does not produce the desired effect, he is excluded for a longer or shorter period from the meetings and from all intercourse with the members. In extreme cases expulsion is resorted to. On the other hand, if any one of the members happens to be, from no fault of his own, in pecuniary difficulties, the others will assist him. This system of mutual control and mutual assistance has no doubt something to do with the fact that the Molokánye are distinguished from the surrounding population by their sobriety, uprightness, and material prosperity.

Of the history of the sect my friends in Alexandrov-Haï could tell me very little, but I have obtained from other quarters some interesting information. The founder was a peasant of the province of Tambóv called Uklein, who lived in the reign of Catherine II., and gained his living as an itinerant tailor. For some time he belonged to the sect of the Dukhobortsi—who are sometimes called the Russian Quakers, and who have since become known in Western Europe through the efforts of Count Tolstoy on their behalf—but he soon seceded from them, because he could not admit their doctrine that God dwells in the human soul, and that consequently the chief source of religious truth is internal enlightenment. To him it seemed that religious truth was to be found only in the Scriptures. With this doctrine he soon made many converts, and one day he unexpectedly entered the town of Tambóv, surrounded by seventy "apostles" chanting psalms. They were all quickly arrested and imprisoned, and when the affair was reported to St. Petersburg the Empress Catherine ordered that they should be handed over to the ecclesiastical authorities, and that in the event of their proving obdurate to exhortation they

should be tried by the Criminal Courts. Uklein professed to recant, and was liberated; but he continued his teaching secretly in the villages, and at the time of his death he was believed to have no fewer than five thousand followers.

As to the actual strength of the sect it is difficult to form even a conjecture. Certainly it has many thousand members—probably several hundred thousand. Formerly the Government transported them from the central provinces to the thinly populated outlying districts, where they had less opportunity of contaminating Orthodox neighbours; and accordingly we find them in the south-eastern districts of Samára, on the north coast of the Sea of Azov, in the Crimea, in the Caucasus, and in Siberia. There are still, however, very many of them in the central region, especially in the province of Tambóv.

The readiness with which the Molokánye modify their opinions and beliefs in accordance with what seems to them new light saves them effectually from bigotry and fanaticism, but it at the same time exposes them to evils of a different kind, from which they might be preserved by a few stubborn prejudices. "False prophets arise among us," said an old, sober-minded member to me on one occasion, "and lead many away from the faith."

In 1835, for example, great excitement was produced among them by rumours that the Second Advent of Christ was at hand, and that the Son of Man, coming to judge the world, was about to appear in the New Jerusalem, somewhere near Mount Ararat. As Elijah and Enoch were to appear before the opening of the Millennium, they were anxiously awaited by the faithful, and at last Elijah appeared, in the person of a Melitopol peasant called Bêlozvorov, who announced that on a given day he would ascend into heaven. On the appointed day a great crowd collected, but he failed to keep his promise, and was handed over to the police as an impostor by the Molokánye themselves. Unfortunately they were not always so sensible as on that occasion. In the very next year many of them were persuaded by a certain Lukian Petróv to put on their best garments and start for the Promised Land

in the Caucasus, where the Millennium was about to begin.*

Of the Molokán false prophets the most remarkable in recent times was a man who called himself Ivan Grigoriev, a mysterious personage who had at one time a Turkish and at another an American passport, but who seemed in all other respects a genuine Russian. Some years previously to my visit he appeared at Alexandrov-Haï. Though he professed himself to be a good Molokán and was received as such, he enounced at the weekly meetings many new and startling ideas. At first he simply urged his hearers to live like the early Christians, and have all things in common. This seemed sound doctrine to the Molokánye, who profess to take the early Christians as their model, and some of them thought of at once abolishing personal property; but when the teacher intimated pretty plainly that this communism should include free love, a decided opposition arose, and it was objected that the early Church did not recommend wholesale adultery and cognate sins. This was a formidable objection, but "the prophet" was equal to the occasion. He reminded his friends that in accordance with their own doctrine the Scriptures should be understood, not in the literal, but in the spiritual, sense—that Christianity had made men free, and every true Christian ought to use his freedom.

This account of the new doctrine was given to me by an intelligent Molokán, who had formerly been a peasant and was now a trader, as I sat one evening in his house in Novo-usensk, the chief town of the district in which Alexandrov-Haï is situated. It seemed to me that the author of this ingenious attempt to conciliate Christianity with extreme Utilitarianism must be an educated man in disguise. This conviction I communicated to my host, but he did not agree with me.

"No, I think not," he replied; "in fact, I am sure he is a peasant, and I strongly suspect he was at some time a

* It may be remembered that a few years ago a similar movement took place among the Russian Dukhobortsi settled in Northern Canada, and that the authorities had to interfere, because the pilgrims journeying southwards towards Winnipeg where the Second Advent was expected, instead of putting on their best garments like the adherents of Lukian Petróv, insisted on wearing no garments at all.

soldier. He has not much learning, but he has a wonderful gift of talking. Never have I heard anyone speak like him. He would have talked over the whole village, had it not been for an old man who was more than a match for him. And then he went to Orlóv-Haï, and there he did talk the people over." What he really did in this latter place I never could clearly ascertain. Report said that he founded a communistic association, of which he was himself president and treasurer, and converted the members to an extraordinary theory of prophetic succession, invented apparently for his own sensual gratification. For further information my host advised me to apply either to the prophet himself, who was at that time confined in the jail on a charge of using a forged passport, or to one of his friends, a certain Mr. I——, who lived in the town. As it was a difficult matter to gain admittance to the prisoner, and I had little time at my disposal, I adopted the latter alternative.

Mr. I—— was himself a somewhat curious character. He had been a student in Moscow, and in consequence of some youthful indiscretions during the University disturbances, had been exiled to this place. After waiting in vain some years for a release, he gave up the idea of entering one of the learned professions, married a peasant girl, rented a piece of land, bought a pair of camels, and settled down as a small farmer.* He had a great deal to tell about the prophet.

Grigoriev, it seemed, was really a simple Russian peasant, but he had been from his youth upwards one of those restless people who can never long work in harness. Where his native place was, and why he left it, he never divulged, for reasons best known to himself. He had travelled much, and had been an attentive observer. Whether he had ever been in America was doubtful, but he had certainly been in Turkey, and had fraternised with various Russian sectarians, who are to be found in considerable numbers near the Danube. Here, probably, he acquired many of his peculiar religious ideas, and conceived his grand scheme

* Here for the first time I saw camels used for agricultural purposes. When yoked to a small four-wheeled cart, the "ships of the desert" seemed decidedly out of place.

of founding a new religion—of rivalling the Founder of Christianity! He aimed at nothing less than this, as he on one occasion confessed, and he did not see why he should not be successful. He believed that the Founder of Christianity had been simply a man like himself, who understood better than others the people around him and the circumstances of the time, and he was convinced that he himself had these qualifications. One qualification, however, for becoming a prophet he certainly did not possess: he had no genuine religious enthusiasm in him—nothing of the martyr spirit about him. Much of his own preaching he did not himself believe, and he had a secret contempt for those who naïvely accepted it all. Not only was he cunning, but he knew he was cunning, and he was conscious that he was playing an assumed part. And yet perhaps it would be unjust to say that he was merely an impostor exclusively occupied with his own personal advantage. Though he was naturally a man of sensual tastes, and could not resist convenient opportunities of gratifying them, he seemed to believe that his communistic schemes would, if realised, be beneficial not only to himself, but also to the people. Altogether a curious mixture of the prophet, the social reformer, and the cunning impostor!

Besides the Molokánye, there are in Russia many other heretical sects. Some of them are simply Evangelical Protestants, like the "Stundisti," who have adopted the religious conceptions of their neighbours, the German colonists; whilst others are composed of wild enthusiasts, who give a loose rein to their excited imagination, and revel in what the Germans aptly term "der höhere Blödsinn." I cannot here attempt to convey even a general idea of these fantastic sects with their doctrinal and ceremonial absurdities, but I may offer the following classification of them for the benefit of those who may desire to study the subject:—

1. Sects which take the Scriptures as the basis of their belief, but interpret and complete the doctrines therein contained by means of the occasional inspiration or internal enlightenment of their leading members.

2. Sects which reject interpretation and insist on certain passages of Scripture being taken in the literal sense. In

one of the best known of these sects—the Skoptsi, or Eunuchs—fanaticism has led to physical mutilation.

3. Sects which pay little or no attention to Scripture, and derive their doctrine from the supposed inspiration of their living teachers.

4. Sects which believe in the re-incarnation of Christ.

5. Sects which confound religion with nervous excitement, and are more or less erotic in their character. The excitement necessary for prophesying is commonly produced by dancing, jumping, pirouetting, or self-castigation; and the absurdities spoken at such times are regarded as the direct expression of Divine wisdom. The religious exercises resemble more or less closely those of the "dancing dervishes" and "howling dervishes," with which all who have visited Constantinople are familiar. There is, however, one important difference: these dervishes practise their religious exercises in public, and consequently observe a certain decorum, whilst the Russian sects to which I refer assemble in secret, and give free scope to their excitement, so that most disgusting orgies sometimes take place at their meetings.

To illustrate the general character of the sects belonging to this last category, I may quote here a short extract from a description of the "Khlysti" by one who was initiated into their mysteries:—"Among them men and women alike take upon themselves the calling of teachers and prophets, and in this character they lead a strict, ascetic life, refrain from the most ordinary and innocent pleasures, exhaust themselves by long fasting and wild, ecstatic religious exercises, and abhor marriage. Under the excitement caused by their supposed holiness and inspiration, they call themselves not only teachers and prophets, but also 'Saviours,' 'Redeemers,' 'Christs,' 'Mothers of God.' Generally speaking, they call themselves simply Gods, and pray to each other as to real Gods and living Christs or Madonnas. When several of these teachers come together at a meeting, they dispute with each other in a vain, boasting way as to which of them possesses most grace and power. In this rivalry they sometimes give each other lusty blows on the ear, and he who bears the blows most patiently, turning

the other cheek to the smiter, acquires the reputation of having most holiness."

Another sect belonging to this category is the Jumpers, among whom the erotic element is disagreeably prominent. Here is a description of their religious meetings, which are held during summer in the forest, and during winter in some outhouse or barn:—"After due preparation prayers are read by the chief teacher, dressed in a white robe and standing in the midst of the congregation. At first he reads in an ordinary tone of voice, and then passes gradually into a merry chant. When he remarks that the chanting has sufficiently acted on the hearers, he begins to jump. The hearers, singing likewise, follow his example. Their ever-increasing excitement finds expression in the highest possible jumps. This they continue as long as they can—men and women alike yelling like enraged savages. When all are thoroughly exhausted, the leader declares that he hears the angels singing"—and then begins a scene which cannot be here described.

It is but fair to add that we know very little of these peculiar sects, and what we do know is furnished by avowed enemies. It is very possible, therefore, that some of them are not nearly so absurd as they are commonly represented, and that many of the stories told are mere calumnies.

Until quite recently the Government showed itself very hostile to sectarianism, and occasionally endeavoured to suppress it. This was natural enough as regards these fantastic sects, but it seems strange that the peaceful, industrious, honest Molokánye and Stundisti should have been put under the ban. Why is it that a Russian peasant should be punished for holding doctrines which are openly professed, with the sanction of the authorities, by his neighbours, the German colonists?

To understand this the reader must know that according to Russian conception there are two distinct kinds of heresy, distinguished from each other, not by the doctrines held, but by the nationality of the holder. It seems to a Russian in the nature of things that Tartars should be Mahometans, that Poles should be Roman Catholics, and that Germans should be Protestants; and the mere act of becoming a

Russian subject is not supposed to lay the Tartar, the Pole, or the German under any obligation to change his faith. These nationalities, therefore, have always been allowed the most perfect freedom in the exercise of their respective religions, so long as they refrained from disturbing by propagandism the divinely established order of things.

This is the received theory, and we must do the Russians the justice to say that they have habitually acted up to it. If the Government has sometimes attempted to convert alien races, the motive has always been political, and the efforts have never awakened much sympathy among the people at large, or even among the clergy. In like manner the missionary societies which have sometimes been formed in imitation of the Western nations have never received much popular support. Thus with regard to aliens this peculiar theory led to very extensive religious toleration. With regard to the Russians themselves the theory had a very different effect. If in the nature of things the Tartar is a Mahometan, the Pole a Roman Catholic, and the German a Protestant, it is equally in the nature of things that the Russian should be a member of the Orthodox Church. On this point the written law and public opinion were in perfect accord. If an Orthodox Russian became a Roman Catholic or a Protestant, he was amenable to the criminal law, and was at the same time condemned by public opinion as an apostate and renegade—almost as a traitor. Now there is a change for the better. In March, 1903, liberty of conscience was solemnly proclaimed by the Tsar as a general principle, and since that time the principle has been gradually introduced into the legislation, but we must not expect that the old conceptions on the subject will immediately disappear.

As to the future of these heretical sects it is impossible to speak with confidence. The more gross and fantastic will probably disappear as primary education spreads among the people; but the Protestant sects seem to possess much more vitality. For the present, at least, they are rapidly spreading. I have seen large villages where, according to the testimony of the inhabitants, there was not a single heretic fifteen years before, and where one-half of the

population had already become Molokánye; and this change, be it remarked, had taken place without any propagandist organisation and before the principle of toleration had been proclaimed. The civil and ecclesiastical authorities were well aware of the existence of the movement, but they were powerless to prevent it. The few efforts which they made were without effect, or worse than useless. Among the Stundists corporal punishment was tried as an antidote—without the concurrence, it is to be hoped, of the central authorities—and to the Molokánye of the province of Samára a learned monk was sent in the hope of converting them from their errors by reason and eloquence. What effect the birch-twigs had on the religious convictions of the Stundists I have not been able to ascertain, but I assume that they were not very efficacious, because the sect remained at least as numerous as before.

Of the mission in the province of Samára I happen to know more, and can state on the evidence of many peasants —some of them Orthodox—that the only immediate effect was to stir up religious fanaticism, and to induce a certain number of Orthodox to go over to the heretical camp. In their public discussions the disputants could find no common ground on which to argue, for the simple reason that their fundamental conceptions were different. The monk spoke of the Church as the terrestrial representative of Christ and the sole possessor of truth, whilst his opponents knew nothing of a Church in this sense, and held simply that all men should live in accordance with the dictates of Scripture. Once the monk consented to argue with them on their own ground, and on that occasion he sustained a signal defeat, for he could not produce a single passage recommending the veneration of Icons—a practice which the Russian peasants consider an essential part of Orthodoxy. After this he always insisted on the authority of the early Œcumenical Councils and the Fathers of the Church —an authority which his antagonists did not recognise. Altogether the mission was a complete failure, and all parties regretted that it had been undertaken. "It was a great mistake," remarked to me confidentially an Orthodox peasant—"a very great mistake! The Molokánye are a

cunning people. The monk was no match for them; they knew the Scriptures a great deal better than he did. The Church should not condescend to discuss with heretics."

It is often said that these heretical sects are politically disaffected, and the Molokánye are thought to be specially dangerous in this respect. Perhaps there is a certain foundation for this opinion, for men are naturally disposed to doubt the legitimacy of a power that systematically persecutes them; but with regard to the Molokánye, I believe the accusation to be a groundless calumny. Political ideas seemed entirely foreign to their modes of thought. During my intercourse with them I often heard them refer to the police as "wolves which have to be fed," but I never heard them speak of the Emperor otherwise than in terms of filial affection and veneration.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DISSENTERS

We must be careful not to confound those heretical sects, Protestant and Fantastical, of which I have spoken in the preceding chapter, with the more numerous Dissenters or Schismatics, the descendants of those who seceded from the Russian Church—or more correctly from whom the Russian Church seceded—in the seventeenth century. So far from regarding themselves as heretics, these latter consider themselves more orthodox than the official Orthodox Church. They are conservatives, too, in the social as well as the religious sense of the term. Among them are to be found the last remnants of old Russian life, untinged by foreign influences.

The Russian Church, as I have already had occasion to remark, has always paid inordinate attention to ceremonial observances, and somewhat neglected the doctrinal and moral elements of the faith which it professes. This peculiarity greatly facilitated the spread of its influence among a people accustomed to pagan rites and magical incantations, but it had the pernicious effect of confirming in the new converts their superstitious belief in the virtue of mere ceremonies. Thus the Russians became zealous Christians in all matters of external observance, without knowing much about the spiritual meaning of the rites which they practised. They looked upon the rites and sacraments as mysterious charms which preserved them from evil influences in the present life and secured them eternal felicity in the life to come, and they believed that these charms would inevitably lose their efficacy if modified in the slightest degree. Extreme importance was therefore attached to the ritual minutiæ, and the slightest modification of these minutiæ assumed the importance of an historical event. In the year 1476, for instance, the Novgorodian Chronicler gravely relates:—

"This winter some philosophers (!) began to sing, 'Oh Lord, have mercy,' and others merely, 'Lord, have mercy.'" And this attaching of enormous importance to trifles was not confined to the ignorant multitude. An Archbishop of Novgorod declared solemnly that those who repeat the word "Alleluia" only twice at certain points in the liturgy "sing to their own damnation," and a celebrated Ecclesiastical Council, held in 1551, put such matters as the position of the fingers when making the sign of the cross on the same level as heresies—formally anathematising those who acted in such trifles contrary to its decisions.

This conservative spirit in religious concerns had a considerable influence on social life. As there was no clear line of demarcation between religious observances and simple traditional customs, the most ordinary act might receive a religious significance, and the slightest departure from a traditional custom might be looked upon as a deadly sin. A Russian of the olden time would have resisted the attempt to deprive him of his beard as strenuously as a Calvinist of the present day would resist the attempt to make him abjure the doctrine of Predestination—and both for the same reason. As the doctrine of Predestination is for the Calvinist, so the wearing of a beard was for the old Russian—an essential of salvation. "Where," asked one of the Patriarchs of Moscow, "will those who shave their chins stand at the Last Day?—among the righteous adorned with beards, or among the beardless heretics?" The question required no answer.

In the seventeenth century this superstitious, conservative spirit reached its climax. The civil wars and foreign invasions, accompanied by pillage, famine, and plagues, with which that century opened, produced a widespread conviction that the end of all things was at hand. The mysterious number of the Beast was found to indicate the year 1666, and timid souls began to discover signs of that falling away from the Faith which is spoken of in the Apocalypse. The majority of the people did not perhaps share this notion, but they believed that the sufferings with which they had been visited were a Divine punishment for having forsaken the ancient customs. And it could not be

denied that considerable changes had taken place. Orthodox Russia was now tainted with the presence of heretics. Foreigners who shaved their chins and smoked the accursed weed had been allowed to settle in Moscow, and the Tsars not only held converse with them, but had even adopted some of their "pagan" practices. Besides this, the Government had introduced innovations and reforms, many of which were displeasing to the people. In short, the country was polluted with "heresy"—a subtle, evil influence lurking in everything foreign, and very dangerous to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Faithful—something of the nature of an epidemic, but infinitely more dangerous; for disease kills merely the body, whereas "heresy" kills the soul, and causes both soul and body to be cast into hell fire.

Had the Government introduced the innovations slowly and cautiously, respecting as far as possible all outward forms, it might have effected much without producing a religious panic; but, instead of acting circumspectly as the occasion demanded, it ran full-tilt against the ancient prejudices and superstitious fears, and drove the people into open resistance. When the art of printing was introduced, it became necessary to choose the best texts of the Liturgy, Psalter, and other religious books, and on examination it was found that, through the ignorance and carelessness of copyists, numerous errors had crept into the manuscripts in use. This discovery led to further investigation, which showed that certain irregularities had likewise crept into the ceremonial. The chief of the clerical errors lay in the orthography of the word "Jesus," and the chief irregularity in the ceremonial regarded the position of the fingers when making the sign of the cross.

To correct these errors, the celebrated Nikon, who was Patriarch in the time of Tsar Alexis, father of Peter the Great, ordered all the old liturgical books and the old Icons to be called in, and new ones to be distributed; but the clergy and the people resisted. Believing these "Nikonian novelties" to be heretical, they clung to their old Icons, their old missals and their old religious customs, as the sole anchors of safety which could save the Faithful from drifting

to perdition. In vain the Patriarch assured the people that the change was a return to the ancient forms still preserved in Greece and Constantinople. "The Greek Church," it was replied, "is no longer free from heresy: Orthodoxy has become many-coloured from the violence of the Turkish Mahomet; and the Greeks, under the sons of Hagar, have fallen away from the ancient traditions."

An anathema, formally pronounced by an Ecclesiastical Council against these Nonconformists, had no more effect than the admonitions of the Patriarch. They persevered in their obstinacy, and refused to believe that the blessed saints and holy martyrs who had used the ancient forms had not prayed and crossed themselves aright. "Not those holy men of old, but the present Patriarch and his counsellors must be heretics." "Woe to us! Woe to us!" cried the monks of Solovetsk—a much revered monastery on an island in the White Sea—when they received the new Liturgies. "What have you done with the Son of God? Give Him back to us! You have changed Isus (the old Russian form of Jesus) into Iisus! It is fearful not only to commit such a sin, but even to think of it!" And the sturdy monks shut their gates, and defied Patriarch, Council, and Tsar for seven long years, till the monastery was taken by an armed force.

The decree of excommunication pronounced by the Ecclesiastical Council placed the Nonconformists beyond the pale of the Church, and the civil power undertook the task of persecuting them. Persecution had, of course, merely the effect of confirming the victims in their belief that the Church and the Tsar had become heretical. Thousands fled across the frontier and settled in the neighbouring countries—Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Austria, Turkey, the Caucasus, and Siberia. Others concealed themselves in the northern forests, and in the densely wooded region near the Polish frontier, where they lived by agriculture or fishing, and prayed, crossed themselves, and buried their dead according to the customs of their forefathers. The northern forests were their favourite place of refuge. Hither flocked many of those who wished to keep themselves pure and undefiled. Here the more learned men among the Nonconformists—

well acquainted with Holy Writ, with fragmentary translations from the Greek Fathers, and with the more important decisions of the early Œcumenical Councils—wrote polemical and edifying works for the confounding of heretics and the confirming of true believers. Hence were sent out in all directions zealous missionaries, in the guise of traders, peddlers, and labourers, to sow what they called the living seed, and what the official Church termed "Satan's tares." When the Government agents discovered these retreats, the inmates generally fled from the "ravenous wolves"; but on more than one occasion a large number of fanatical men and women, shutting themselves up, set fire to their houses, and voluntarily perished in the flames. In Paleostrovski Monastery, for instance—a famous resort of pilgrims, on a rocky islet in Lake Onega—in the year 1687, no fewer than 2,700 fanatics gained the crown of martyrdom in this way; and many similar instances are on record.* As in all periods of religious panic, the Apocalypse was carefully studied, and the Millennial ideas rapidly spread. The signs of the time were plain: Satan was being let loose for a little season. Men anxiously looked for the reappearance of Antichrist—and Antichrist appeared! The man in whom the people recognised the incarnate spirit of evil was no other than Peter the Great.

From the Nonconformist point of view, Peter had very strong claims to be considered Antichrist. He had none of the staid, pious demeanour of the old Tsars, and showed no respect for many things which were venerated by the people. He ate, drank, and habitually associated with heretics, spoke their language, wore their costume, chose from among them his most intimate friends, and favoured them more than his own people. Imagine the horror and commotion which would be produced among pious Catholics if the Pope should some day appear in the costume of the Grand Turk, and should choose Pashas as his chief counsellors! The horror which Peter's conduct produced among a large section of his subjects was not less great.

* A list of well-authenticated cases is given by Nilski, "Seméinaya zhizn v russkom Raskólê," St. Petersburg, 1869, part I., pp. 55—57. The number of these self-immolators certainly amounted to many thousands.

They could not explain it otherwise than by supposing him to be the Devil in disguise, and they saw in all his important measures convincing proofs of his Satanic origin. The newly invented census, or "revision," was a profane "numbering of the people," and an attempt to enrol in the service of Beëlzebub those whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The new title of Imperator was explained to mean something very diabolical. The passport bearing the Imperial arms was the seal of Antichrist. The order to shave the beard was an attempt to disfigure "the image of God," after which man had been created, and by which Christ would recognise His own at the Last Day. The change in the calendar, by which New Year's Day was transferred from September to January, was the destruction of "the years of our Lord," and the introduction of the years of Satan in their place. Of the ingenious arguments by which these theses were supported, I may quote one by way of illustration. The world, it was explained, could not have been created in January, as the new calendar seemed to indicate, because apples are not ripe at that season, and consequently Eve could not have been tempted in the way described! *

These ideas regarding Peter and his reforms were strongly confirmed by the vigorous persecutions which took place during the earlier years of his reign. The Nonconformists were constantly convicted of political disaffection —especially of "insulting the Imperial Majesty"—and were accordingly flogged, tortured, and beheaded without mercy. But when Peter had succeeded in putting down all armed opposition, and found that the movement was no longer dangerous for the throne, he adopted a policy more in accordance with his personal character. Whether he himself had any religious belief whatever may be doubted; certainly he had not a spark of religious fanaticism in his nature. Exclusively occupied with secular concerns, he took no interest in subtle questions of religious ceremonial, and was profoundly indifferent as to how his subjects prayed and crossed themselves, provided they obeyed his orders in

* I found this ingenious argument in one of the polemical treatises of the Old Believers.

worldly matters and paid their taxes regularly. As soon, therefore, as political considerations admitted of clemency, he stopped the persecutions, and at last, in 1714, issued ukazes to the effect that all Dissenters might live unmolested, provided they inscribed themselves in the official registers and paid a double poll-tax. Somewhat later they were allowed to practise freely all their old rites and customs, on condition of paying certain fines.

With the accession of Catherine II., "the friend of philosophers," the *Raskól,** as the schism had come to be called, entered on a new phase. Penetrated with the ideas of religious toleration then in fashion in Western Europe, Catherine abolished the disabilities to which the Raskólniks were subjected, and invited those of them who had fled across the frontier to return to their homes. Thousands accepted the invitation, and many who had hitherto sought to conceal themselves from the eyes of the authorities became rich and respected merchants. The peculiar semi-monastic religious communities, which had up till that time existed only in the forests of the northern and western provinces, began to appear in Moscow, and were officially recognised by the Administration. At first they took the form of hospitals for the sick, or asylums for the aged and infirm, but soon they became regular monasteries, the superiors of which exercised an undefined spiritual authority not only over the inmates, but also over the members of the sect throughout the length and breadth of the Empire.

From that time down to the present the Government has followed a wavering policy, oscillating between complete tolerance and active persecution. It must, however, be said that the persecution has never been of a very searching kind. In persecution, as in all other manifestations, the Russian Church directs its attention chiefly to external forms. It does not seek to ferret out heresy in a man's opinions, but complacently accepts as Orthodox all who annually appear at confession and communion, and who refrain from acts of open hostility. Those who can make these concessions

* The term is derived from two Russian words—*ras*, asunder; and *kolot*, to split. Those who belong to the *Raskól* are called *Raskólniks*. They call themselves *Stáro-obriddtsi* (Old Ritualists) or *Starovêri* (Old Believers).

to conventionalities are practically free from molestation, and those who cannot so trifle with their conscience have an equally convenient method of escaping persecution. The parish clergy, with their customary indifference to things spiritual and their traditional habit of regarding their functions from the financial point of view, are hostile to sectarianism, chiefly because it diminishes their revenues by diminishing the number of parishioners requiring their ministrations. This cause of hostility, therefore, could easily be removed by a certain pecuniary sacrifice on the part of the sectarians, and accordingly there used to exist between them and their parish priest a tacit contract, by which both parties were perfectly satisfied. The priest received his income as if all his parishioners belonged to the State Church, and the parishioners were left in peace to believe and practise what they pleased. By this rude, convenient method a very large amount of toleration was effectually secured. Whether the practice had a beneficial moral influence on the parish clergy is, of course, an entirely different question.

When the priest had been satisfied, there still remained the police, who likewise levied an irregular tax on heterodoxy; but the negotiations were generally not difficult, for it was in the interest of both parties that they should come to terms and live in good fellowship. Thus, from the time of Catherine II. until 1903, when freedom of conscience was proclaimed, the Raskólniks lived practically under the same conditions as in the last years of Peter the Great's reign; they paid a tax and were not molested—only the money paid for toleration did not find its way into the Imperial Exchequer. These external changes in the history of the *Raskól* exercised a powerful influence on its internal development.

When formally anathematised and excluded from the dominant Church, the Nonconformists had neither a definite organisation nor a positive creed. The only tie that bound them together was hostility to the "Nikonian novelties," and all they desired was to preserve intact the beliefs and customs of their forefathers. At first they never thought of creating any permanent organisation. The more moderate believed

that the old order of things would soon be re-established, and the more fanatical imagined that the end of all things was at hand.* In either case they had only to suffer for a little season, keeping themselves free from the taint of heresy and from all contact with the kingdom of Antichrist.

But years passed, and neither of these expectations was fulfilled. The fanatics awaited in vain the sound of the last trump and the appearance of Christ coming with His angels to judge the world. The sun continued to rise, and the seasons followed each other in their accustomed courses, but the end was not yet. Nor did the civil power return to the old faith, though Nikon fell a victim to Court intrigues and his own overweening pride, and was formally deposed. Tsar Alexis in the fulness of time was gathered unto his fathers, but there was no sign of a re-establishment of the old Orthodoxy. Gradually the leading Raskólniks perceived that they must make preparations, not for the Day of Judgment, but for a terrestrial future—that they must create some permanent form of ecclesiastical organisation. In this work they encountered at the very outset not only practical but also theoretical difficulties.

So long as they confined themselves simply to resisting the official innovations, they seemed to be unanimous; but when they were forced to abandon this negative policy and to determine theoretically their new position, radical differences of opinion became apparent. All were convinced that the official Russian Church had become heretical, and that it had now Antichrist instead of Christ as its head; but it was not easy to determine what should be done by those who refused to bow the knee to the Son of Destruction. According to Protestant conceptions there was a very simple solution of the difficulty: the Nonconformists had simply to create a new Church for themselves, and worship God in the way that seemed good to them. But to the Russians of that time such notions were still more repulsive than the innovations of Nikon. These men were Orthodox to the backbone—"plus royalistes que le roi"—and according to Orthodox conceptions the founding of a new Church is an

* Some had coffins made, and lay down in them at night, in the expectation that the Second Advent might take place before the morning.

absurdity. They believed that if the chain of historic continuity were once broken, the Church must necessarily cease to exist, in the same way as an ancient family becomes extinct when its sole representative dies without issue. If, therefore, the Church had already ceased to exist, there was no longer any means of communication between Christ and His people, the sacraments were no longer efficacious, and mankind was for ever deprived of the ordinary means of grace.

Now, on this important point a difference of opinion arose among the Dissenters. Some of them believed that, though the ecclesiastical authorities had become heretical, the Church still existed in the communion of those who had refused to accept the innovations. Others declared boldly that the Orthodox Church had ceased to exist, that the ancient means of grace had been withdrawn, and that those who had remained faithful must thenceforth seek salvation, not in the sacraments, but in prayer and such other religious exercises as did not require the co-operation of duly consecrated priests. Thus took place a schism among the Schismatics. The one party retained all the sacraments and ceremonial observances in the older form; the other refrained from the sacraments and from many of the ordinary rites, on the ground that there was no longer a real priesthood, and that consequently the sacraments could not be efficacious. The former party are termed *Stáro-obriádtsi,* or Old Ritualists; the latter are called *Bezpopóvtsi*—that is to say, people "without priests" (*bez popóv*).

The succeeding history of these two sections of the Nonconformists has been widely different. The Old Ritualists, being simply ecclesiastical Conservatives desirous of resisting all innovations, have remained a compact body little troubled by differences of opinion. The Priestless People, on the contrary, ever seeking to discover some new effectual means of salvation, have fallen into an endless number of independent sects.

The Old Ritualists had still, however, one important theoretical difficulty. At first they had amongst themselves plenty of consecrated priests for the celebration of the ordinances, but they had no means of renewing the supply.

They had no bishops, and according to Orthodox belief the lower degrees of the clergy cannot be created without episcopal consecration. At the time of the schism one bishop had thrown in his lot with the Schismatics, but he had died shortly afterwards without leaving a successor, and thereafter no bishop had joined their ranks. As time wore on, the necessity of episcopal consecration came to be more and more felt, and it is not a little interesting to observe how these rigorists, who held to the letter of the law and declared themselves ready to die for a jot or a tittle, modified their theory in accordance with the changing exigencies of their position. When the priests who had kept themselves "pure and undefiled"—free from all contact with Antichrist—became scarce, it was discovered that certain priests of the dominant Church might be accepted if they formally abjured the Nikonian novelties. At first, however, only those who had been *consecrated* previous to the supposed apostasy of the Church were accepted, for the very good reason that consecration by bishops who had become heretical could not be efficacious. When these could no longer be obtained it was discovered that those who had been *baptised* previous to the apostasy might be accepted; and when even these could no longer be found, a still further concession was made to necessity, and *all* consecrated priests were received on condition of their solemnly abjuring their errors. Of such priests there was always an abundant supply. If a regular priest could not find a parish, or if he was deposed by the authorities for some crime or misdemeanour, he had merely to pass over to the Old Ritualists, and was sure to find among them a hearty welcome and a tolerable salary.

By these concessions the indefinite prolongation of Old Ritualism was secured, but many of the Old Ritualists could not but feel that their position was, to say the least, extremely anomalous. They had no bishops of their own, and their priests were all consecrated by bishops whom they believed to be heretical! For many years they hoped to escape from this dilemma by discovering "Orthodox"—that is to say, Old Ritualist—bishops somewhere in the East; but when the East had been searched in vain, and all their efforts to obtain native bishops proved fruitless, they con-

ceived the design of creating a bishopric somewhere beyond the frontier, among the Old Ritualists who had in times of persecution fled to Prussia, Austria, and Turkey. There were, however, immense difficulties in the way. In the first place it was necessary to obtain the formal permission of some foreign Government; and in the second place an Orthodox bishop must be found, willing to consecrate an Old Ritualist or to become an Old Ritualist himself. Again and again the attempt was made and failed; but at last, after years of effort and intrigue, the design was realised. In 1844 the Austrian Government gave permission to found a bishopric at Bêlaya Krinitsa, in Galicia, a few miles from the Russian frontier; and two years later the deposed Metropolitan of Bosnia consented, after much hesitation, to pass over to the Old Ritualist confession and accept the diocese.* From that time the Old Ritualists have had their own bishops, and have not been obliged to accept the runaway priests of the official Church.

The Old Ritualists were naturally much grieved by the schism, and were often sorely tried by persecution, but they have always enjoyed a certain spiritual tranquillity, proceeding from the conviction that they have preserved for themselves the means of salvation. The position of the more extreme section of the Schismatics was much more tragical. They believed that the sacraments had irretrievably lost their efficacy, that the ordinary means of salvation were for ever withdrawn, that the powers of darkness had been let loose for a little season, that the authorities were the agents of Satan, and that the personage who filled the place of the old God-fearing Tsars was no other than Antichrist. Under the influence of these horrible ideas they fled to the woods and the caves to escape from the rage of the Beast, and to await the Second Coming of our Lord.

This state of things could not continue permanently. Extreme religious fanaticism, like all other abnormal states, cannot long exist in a mass of human beings without some constant exciting cause. The vulgar necessities of everyday

* An interesting account of these negotiations, and a most curious picture of the Orthodox ecclesiastical world in Constantinople, is given by Subbótin, "Istoria Bêlokrinitskoi Ierarkhii," Moscow, 1874.

life, especially among people who have to live by the labour of their hands, have a wonderfully sobering influence on the excited brain, and must always, sooner or later, prove fatal to inordinate excitement. A few peculiarly constituted individuals may show themselves capable of a lifelong enthusiasm, but the multitude is ever spasmodic in its fervour, and begins to slide back to its former apathy as soon as the exciting cause ceases to act.

All this we find exemplified in the history of the "Priestless People." When it was found that the world did not come to an end, and that the rigorous system of persecution was relaxed, the less excitable natures returned to their homes and resumed their old mode of life; and when Peter the Great made his politic concessions, many who had declared him to be Antichrist came to suspect that he was really not so black as he was painted. This idea struck deep root in a religious community near Lake Onega (*Vuigovski Skit*), which had received special privileges on condition of supplying labourers for the neighbouring mines; and here was developed a new theory which opened up a way of reconciliation with the Government. By a more attentive study of Holy Writ and ancient books it was discovered that the reign of Antichrist would consist of two periods. In the former, the Son of Destruction would reign merely in the spiritual sense, and the Faithful would not be much molested; in the latter, he would reign visibly in the flesh, and true believers would be subjected to the most frightful persecution. The second period, it was held, had evidently not yet arrived, for the Faithful now enjoyed "a time of freedom, and not of compulsion or oppression." Whether this theory is strictly in accordance with Apocalyptic prophecy and Patristic theology may be doubted, but it fully satisfied those who had already arrived at the conclusion by a different road, and who sought merely a means of justifying their position. Certain it is that very many accepted it, and determined to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, or, in secular language, to pray for the Tsar and to pay their taxes.

This ingenious compromise was not accepted by all the Priestless People. On the contrary, many of them regarded

it as a woeful backsliding—a new device of the Evil One; and among these irreconcilables was a certain peasant called Theodosi, a man of little education, but of remarkable intellectual power and unusual strength of character. He raised anew the old fanaticism by his preaching and writings—widely circulated in manuscript—and succeeded in founding a new sect in the forest region near the Polish frontier.

The Priestless Nonconformists thus fell into two sections; the one, called *Pomórtsi,** accepted at least a partial reconciliation with the civil power; the other, called Theodosians, after their founder, held to the old opinions, and refused to regard the Tsar otherwise than as Antichrist.

These latter were at first very wild in their fanaticism, but ere long they gave way to the influences which had softened the fanaticism of the Pomórtsi. Under the liberal, conciliatory rule of Catherine they lived in contentment, and many of them enriched themselves by trade. Their fanatical zeal and exclusiveness evaporated under the influence of material well-being and constant contact with the outer world, especially after they were allowed to build a monastery in Moscow. The Superior of this monastery, a man of much shrewdness and enormous wealth, succeeded in gaining the favour not only of the lower officials, who could be easily bought, but even of high-placed dignitaries, and for many years he exercised a very real, if undefined, authority over all sections of the Priestless People. "His fame," it is said, "sounded throughout Moscow, and the echoes were heard in Petropol (St. Petersburg), Riga, Astrakhan, Nizhni-Novgorod, and other lands of piety"; and when deputies came to consult him, they prostrated themselves in his presence, as before the great ones of the earth. Living thus not only in peace and plenty, but even in honour and luxury, "the proud Patriarch of the Theodosian Church" could not consistently fulminate against "the ravenous wolves," with whom he was on friendly terms, or excite the fanaticism of his followers by highly coloured descriptions of "the awful sufferings and persecution of God's people in these latter

* The word *Pomórtsi* means "those who live near the sea-shore." It is commonly applied to the inhabitants of the northern provinces—that is, those who live near the shore of the White Sea, the only maritime frontier that Russia possessed previous to the conquests of Peter the Great.

days," as the founder of the sect had been wont to do. Though he could not openly abandon any fundamental doctrines, he allowed the ideas about the reign of Antichrist to fall into the background, and taught by example, if not by precept, that the Faithful might, by prudent concessions, live very comfortably in this present evil world. This seed fell upon soil already prepared for its reception. The Faithful gradually forgot their old savage fanaticism, and they have since contrived, while holding many of their old ideas in theory, to accommodate themselves in practice to the existing order of things.

The gradual softening and toning down of the original fanaticism in these two sects are strikingly exemplified in their ideas of marriage. According to Orthodox doctrine, marriage is a sacrament which can only be performed by a consecrated priest, and consequently for the Priestless People the celebration of marriage was an impossibility; but for some time this did not cause them much inconvenience. In the first ages of sectarianism a state of celibacy was quite in accordance with their surroundings. Living in constant fear of their persecutors, and wandering from one place of refuge to another, the sufferers for the Faith had little time or inclination to think of family ties, and readily listened to the monks, who exhorted them to mortify the lusts of the flesh. The result, however, proved that celibacy in the creed by no means ensures chastity in practice. Not only in the villages of the Dissenters, but even in those religious communities which professed a more ascetic mode of life, a numerous class of "orphans" began to appear, who knew not who their parents were; and this ignorance of blood-relationship naturally led to incestuous connections. Besides this, the doctrine of celibacy had grave practical inconveniences, for the peasant requires a housewife to attend to domestic concerns and to help him in his agricultural occupations. Thus the necessity of re-establishing family life came to be felt, and the feeling soon found expression in a doctrinal form both among the Pomórtsi and among the Theodosians. Learned dissertations were written, and disseminated in manuscript copies, violent discussions took place, and at last a great Council was held in Moscow to

discuss the question.* The point at issue was never unanimously decided, but many accepted the ingenious arguments in favour of matrimony, and contracted marriages which were, of course, null and void in the eye of the law and of the Church, but valid in all other respects.

This new backsliding of the unstable multitude produced a new outburst of fanaticism among the stubborn few. Some of those who had hitherto sought to conceal the origin of the "orphan" class above referred to now boldly asserted that the existence of this class was a religious necessity, because in order to be saved men must repent, and in order to repent men must sin! At the same time the old ideas about Antichrist were revived and preached with fervour by a peasant called Philip, who founded a new sect called the Philipists. This sect still exists. They hold fast to the old belief that the Tsar is Antichrist, and that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities are the servants of Satan—an idea that was kept alive by the corruption and extortion for which the Administration were notorious. They do not venture on open resistance to the authorities, but the bolder members take little pains to conceal their opinions and sentiments, and may be easily recognised by their severe aspect, their Puritanical manner, and their Pharisaical horror of everything which they suppose heretical and unclean. Some of them, it is said, carry this fastidiousness to such an extent that they throw away the handle of a door if it has been touched by a heretic!

It may seem that we have here reached the extreme limits of fanaticism, but in reality there were men whom even the Pharisaical Puritanism of the Philipists did not satisfy. These new zealots, who appeared in the time of Catherine II., but first became known to the official world in the reign of Nicholas I., rebuked the lukewarmness of their brethren, and founded a new sect in order to preserve intact the asceticism practised immediately after the schism. The sect still exists. They call themselves "Christ's People" (*Christóviye Lyúdi*), but are better known under

* I cannot here enter into the details of this remarkable controversy, but I may say that in studying it I have been frequently astonished by the dialectical power and logical subtlety displayed by the disputants, some of them simple peasants.

the popular names of "Wanderers" (*Stránniki*), or "Fugitives" (*Beguný*). Of all the sects they are the most hostile to the existing political and social organisation. Not content with condemning the military conscription, the payment of taxes, the acceptance of passports, and everything connected with the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, they consider it sinful to live peaceably among an Orthodox—that is, according to their belief, a heretical—population, and to have dealings with any who do not share their extreme views. Holding the Antichrist doctrine in its extreme form, they declare that Tsars are the vessels of Satan, that the Established Church is the dwelling-place of the Father of Lies, and that all who submit to the authorities are children of the Devil. According to this creed, those who wish to escape from the wrath to come must have neither houses nor fixed places of abode, must sever all ties that bind them to the world, and must wander about continually from place to place. True Christians are but strangers and pilgrims in the present life, and whoso binds himself to the world will perish with the world.

Such is the theory of these Wanderers, but among them, as among the less fanatical sects, practical necessities have produced concessions and compromises. As it is impossible to lead a nomadic life in Russian forests, the Wanderers have been compelled to admit into their ranks what may be called lay brethren—men who nominally belong to the sect, but who live like ordinary mortals and have some rational way of gaining a livelihood. These latter live in the villages or towns, support themselves by agriculture or trade, accept passports from the authorities, pay their taxes regularly, and conduct themselves in all outward respects like loyal subjects. Their chief religious duty consists in giving food and shelter to their more zealous brethren, who have adopted a vagabond life in practice as well as in theory. It is only when they feel death approaching that they consider it necessary to separate themselves from the heretical world, and they effect this by having themselves carried out to some neighbouring wood—or into a garden if there is no wood at hand—where they may die in the open air.

Thus, we see, there is among the Russian Nonconformist

sects what may be called a gradation of fanaticism, in which is reflected the history of the Great Schism. In the Wanderers we have the representatives of those who adopted and preserved the Antichrist doctrine in its extreme form —the successors of those who fled to the forests to escape from the rage of the Beast and to await the second coming of Christ. In the Philipists we have the representatives of those who adopted these ideas in a somewhat softer form, and who came to recognise the necessity of having some regular means of subsistence until the last trump should be heard. The Theodosians represent those who were in theory at one with the preceding category, but who, having less religious fanaticism, considered it necessary to yield to force and make peace with the Government without sacrificing their convictions. In the Pomórtsi we see those who preserved only the religious ideas of the schism, and became reconciled with the civil power. Lastly, we have the Old Ritualists, who differed from all the other sects in retaining the old ordinances, and who simply rejected the spiritual authority of the dominant Church. Besides these chief sections of the Nonconformists there are a great many minor denominations (*tólki*), differing from each other on minor points of doctrine. In certain districts, it is said, nearly every village has one or two independent sects. This is especially the case among the Don Cossacks and the Cossacks of the Ural, who are in part descendants of the men who fled from the early persecutions.

Of all the sects the Old Ritualists stand nearest to the official Church. They hold the same dogmas, practise the same rites, and differ only in trifling ceremonial matters, which few people consider essential. In the hope of inducing them to return to the official fold the Government created at the beginning of last century special churches, in which they were allowed to retain their ceremonial peculiarities on condition of accepting regularly consecrated priests and submitting to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As yet the design has not met with much success. The great majority of the Old Ritualists regard it as a trap, and assert that the Church in making this concession has been guilty of self-contradiction. "The Ecclesiastical Council of Moscow," they say,

"anathematised our forefathers for holding to the old ritual, and declared that the whole course of nature would be changed sooner than the curse be withdrawn. The course of nature has not been changed, but the anathema has been cancelled." This argument ought to have a certain weight with those who believe in the infallibility of Ecclesiastical Councils.

Towards the Priestless People the Government has always acted in a much less conciliatory spirit. Its severity has been sometimes justified on the ground that sectarianism has had a political as well as a religious significance. A State like Russia cannot overlook the existence of sects which preach the duty of systematic resistance to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and hold doctrines which lead to the grossest immorality. This argument, it must be admitted, is not without a certain force, but it seems to me that the policy adopted tended to increase rather than diminish the evils which it sought to cure. Instead of dispelling the absurd idea that the Tsar was Antichrist by a system of strict and even-handed justice, punishing merely actual crimes and delinquencies, the Government confirmed the notion in the minds of thousands by persecuting those who had committed no crime and who desired merely to worship God according to their conscience. Above all it erred in opposing and punishing those marriages which, though legally irregular, were the best possible means of diminishing fanaticism, by leading back the fanatics to healthy social life. Fortunately these errors have now been abandoned. A policy of greater clemency and conciliation has been adopted, and has proved much more efficacious than persecution. The Dissenters have not returned to the official fold, but they have lost much of their old fanaticism and exclusiveness.

In respect of numbers the sectarians compose a very formidable body. Of Old Ritualists and Priestless People there are, it is said, no less than eleven millions; and the Protestant and Fantastical sects comprise probably about five millions more. If these numbers be correct, the sectarians constitute about a tenth of the whole population of the Empire. They count in their ranks none of the

nobles—none of the so-called enlightened class—but they include in their number a respectable proportion of the peasants, a third of the rich merchant class, the majority of the Don Cossacks, and nearly all the Cossacks of the Ural.

Under these circumstances it is important to know how far the sectarians are politically disaffected. Some people imagine that in the event of an insurrection or a foreign invasion they might rise against the Government, whilst others believe that this supposed danger is purely imaginary. For my own part I agree with the latter opinion, which is strongly supported by the history of many important events, such as the French invasion in 1812, the Crimean War, the Polish insurrection of 1863, and the war with Japan. In none of these troublous times have there been any religious disturbances. The great majority of the Schismatics and heretics are, I believe, loyal subjects of the Tsar. The more violent sects, which are alone capable of active hostility against the authorities, are weak in numbers, and regard all outsiders with such profound mistrust that they are wholly impervious to inflammatory influences from without. Even if all the sects were capable of active hostility, they would not be nearly so formidable as their numbers seem to indicate, for they are hostile to each other, and are wholly incapable of combining for a common purpose.

Though sectarianism is thus by no means a serious political danger, it has nevertheless a considerable political significance. It proves that the Russian people is by no means so docile and pliable as is commonly supposed, and that it is capable of showing a stubborn, passive resistance to authority when it believes great interests to be at stake. The dogged energy which it has displayed in asserting for centuries its religious liberty may perhaps some day be employed in the arena of secular politics.

CHAPTER XIX

CHURCH AND STATE

FROM the curious world of heretics and Dissenters let us pass now to the Russian Orthodox Church, to which the great majority of the Russian people belong. It has played an important part in the national history, and has exercised a powerful influence in the formation of the national character.

Russians are in the habit of patriotically and proudly congratulating themselves on the fact that their forefathers always resisted successfully the aggressive tendencies of the Papacy, but it may be doubted whether, from a worldly point of view, the freedom from Papal authority has been an unmixed blessing for the country. If the Popes failed to realise their grand design of creating a vast European empire based on theocratic principles, they succeeded at least in inspiring with a feeling of brotherhood and a vague consciousness of common interest all the nations which acknowledged their spiritual supremacy. These nations, whilst remaining politically independent and frequently coming into hostile contact with each other, all looked to Rome as the capital of the Christian world, and to the Pope as the highest terrestrial authority. Though the Church did not annihilate nationality, it made a wide breach in the political barriers, and formed a channel for international communication by which the social and intellectual progress of each nation became known to all the other members of the great Christian confederacy. Throughout the length and breadth of the Papal Commonwealth, educated men had a common language, a common literature, a common scientific method, and to a certain extent a common jurisprudence. Western Christendom was thus all through the Middle Ages not merely an abstract conception or a geographical expression: if not a political, it was at least a religious and intellectual unit, and all the countries of which it was composed benefited more or less by the connection.

For centuries Russia stood outside of this religious and intellectual confederation, for her Church connected her not with Rome, but with Constantinople, and Papal Europe looked upon her as belonging to the barbarous East. When the Mongol hosts swept over her plains, burnt her towns and villages, and finally incorporated her into the great empire of Genghis Khan, the so-called Christian world took no interest in the struggle except in so far as its own safety was threatened. And as time wore on, the barriers which separated the two great sections of Christendom became more and more formidable. The aggressive pretensions and ambitious schemes of the Vatican produced in the Greek Orthodox world a profound antipathy to the Roman Catholic Church and to Western influence of every kind. So strong was this aversion that when the nations of the West awakened in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from their intellectual lethargy and began to move forward on the path of intellectual and material progress, Russia not only remained unmoved, but looked on the new civilisation with suspicion and fear as a thing heretical and accursed. We have here one of the chief reasons why Russia, at the present day, is in many respects less civilised than the nations of Western Europe.

But it is not merely in this negative way that the acceptance of Christianity from Constantinople has affected the fate of Russia. The Greek Church, whilst excluding Roman Catholic civilisation, exerted at the same time a powerful positive influence on the historical development of the nation. The Church of the West inherited from old Rome something of that logical, juridical, administrative spirit which had created the Roman law, and something of that ambition and dogged, energetic perseverance that had formed nearly the whole known world into a great centralised empire. The Bishops of Rome early conceived the design of reconstructing that old empire on a new basis, and long strove to create a universal Christian theocratic State, in which kings and other civil authorities should be the subordinates of Christ's Vicar upon earth. The Eastern Church, on the contrary, has remained true to her Byzantine traditions, and has never dreamed of such lofty pretensions. Accustomed to lean on

the civil power, she has always been content to play a secondary part, and has never strenuously resisted the formation of national churches.

For about two centuries after the introduction of Christianity—from 988 till 1240—Russia formed, ecclesiastically speaking, part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The metropolitans and the bishops were Greeks by birth and education, and the ecclesiastical administration was guided and controlled by the Byzantine Patriarchs. But from the time of the Mongol invasion, when the communications with Constantinople became more difficult and educated native priests had become more numerous, this complete dependence on the Patriarch of Constantinople ceased. The Princes gradually arrogated to themselves the right of choosing the Metropolitan of Kief—who was at that time the chief ecclesiastical dignitary in Russia—and merely sent their nominees to Constantinople for consecration. About 1448 this formality came to be dispensed with, and the Metropolitan was commonly consecrated by a Council of Russian bishops. A further step in the direction of ecclesiastical autonomy was taken in 1589, when the Tsar succeeded in procuring the consecration of a Russian Patriarch, equal in dignity and authority to the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria.

In all matters of external form the Patriarch of Moscow was a very important personage. He exercised a certain influence in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs, bore the official title of "Great Lord" (*Veliki Gosudár*), which had previously been reserved for the civil head of the State, and habitually received from the people scarcely less veneration than the Tsar himself. But in reality he possessed very little independent power. The Tsar was the real ruler in ecclesiastical as well as in civil affairs.*

* As this is frequently denied by Russians, it may be well to quote one authority out of many that might be cited. Bishop Makarii, whose erudition and good faith are alike above suspicion, says of Dmitri of the Don: "He arrogated to himself full, unconditional power over the Head of the Russian Church, and through him over the whole Russian Church itself" ("Istoriya Rússkoi Tserkvi," V., p. 101). This is said of a Grand Prince who had strong rivals and had to treat the Church as an ally. When the Grand Princes became Tsars and had no longer any rivals, their power was certainly not diminished. Any further confirmation that may be required will be found in the life of the famous Patriarch Nikon.

The Russian Patriarchate came to an end in the time of Peter the Great. Peter wished, among other things, to reform the ecclesiastical administration, and to introduce into his country many novelties which the majority of the clergy and of the people regarded as heretical; and he clearly perceived that a bigoted, energetic Patriarch might throw considerable obstacles in his way, and cause him infinite annoyance. Though such a Patriarch might be deposed without any flagrant violation of the canonical formalities, the operation would necessarily be attended with great trouble and loss of time. Peter was no friend of roundabout, tortuous methods, and preferred to remove the difficulty in his usual thorough, violent fashion. When the Patriarch Adrian died, the customary short interregnum was prolonged for twenty years, and when the people had thus become accustomed to having no Patriarch, it was announced that no more Patriarchs would be elected. Their place was supplied by an ecclesiastical council, or Synod, in which, as a contemporary explained, "the mainspring was Peter's power, and the pendulum his understanding." The great autocrat justly considered that such a Council could be much more easily managed than a stubborn Patriarch, and the wisdom of the measure has been duly appreciated by succeeding sovereigns. Though the idea of re-establishing the Patriarchate has more than once been raised, and is not yet extinct, it has never been carried into execution. The Holy Synod remains the highest ecclesiastical authority.

But the Emperor? What is his relation to the Synod and to the Church in general?

This is a question about which zealous Orthodox Russians are extremely sensitive. If a foreigner ventures to hint in their presence that the Emperor seems to have a considerable influence in the Church, he may inadvertently produce a little outburst of patriotic warmth and virtuous indignation. The truth is that many Russians have a pet theory on this subject, and have at the same time a dim consciousness that the theory is not quite in accordance with reality. They hold theoretically that the Orthodox Church has no "Head" but Christ, and is in some peculiar undefined sense entirely independent of all terrestrial authority. In

this respect it is often contrasted with the Anglican Church, much to the disadvantage of the latter; and the supposed differences between the two are made a theme for semi-religious, semi-patriotic exultation. Khomiakóv, for instance, in one of his most vigorous poems, predicted that God would one day take the destiny of the world out of the hands of England in order to give it to Russia, and he adduced as one of the reasons for this transfer the fact that England "has chained, with sacrilegious hand, the Church of God to the pedestal of the vain earthly power." So far the theory. As to the facts, it is unquestionable that the Tsar exercises a much greater influence in ecclesiastical affairs than the King and Parliament in England. All who know the internal history of Russia are aware that the Government does not draw a clear line of distinction between the temporal and the spiritual, and that it occasionally uses the ecclesiastical organisation for political purposes.

What, then, are the relations between Church and State?

To avoid confusion, we must carefully distinguish between the Eastern Orthodox Church as a whole and that section of it which is known as the Russian Church.

The Eastern Orthodox Church * is, properly speaking, a confederation of independent churches without any central authority—a unity founded on the possession of a common dogma and on the theoretical but now unrealisable possibility of holding Œcumenical Councils. The Russian National Church is one of the members of this ecclesiastical confederation. In matters of faith it is bound by the decisions of the ancient Œcumenical Councils, but in all other respects it enjoys complete independence and autonomy.

In relation to the Orthodox Church as a whole the Emperor of Russia is nothing more than a simple member, and can no more interfere with its dogmas or ceremonial than a King of Italy or an Emperor of the French could modify Roman Catholic theology; but in relation to the Russian National Church his position is peculiar. He is described in one of the fundamental laws as "the supreme defender and preserver of the dogmas of the dominant faith," and immediately afterwards it is said that "the Autocratic

* Or Greek Orthodox Church, as it is sometimes called.

Power acts in the ecclesiastical administration by means of the most Holy Governing Synod, created by it." * This describes very fairly the relations between the Emperor and the Church. He is merely the defender of the dogmas, and cannot in the least modify them; but he is at the same time the chief administrator, and uses the Synod as an instrument.

Some ingenious people who wish to prove that the creation of the Synod was not an innovation represent the institution as a resuscitation of the ancient local councils; but this view is utterly untenable. The Synod is not a council of deputies from various sections of the Church, but a permanent college, or ecclesiastical senate, the members of which are appointed and dismissed by the Emperor as he thinks fit. It has no independent legislative authority, for its legislative projects do not become law till they have received the Imperial sanction; and they are always published, not in the name of the Church, but in the name of the Supreme Power. Even in matters of simple administration it is not independent, for all its resolutions require the consent of the Procureur, a layman nominated by his Majesty. In theory this functionary protests only against those resolutions which are not in accordance with the civil law of the country; but as he alone has the right to address the Emperor directly on ecclesiastical concerns, and as all communications between the Emperor and the Synod pass through his hands, he possesses in reality considerable power. Besides this, he can always influence the individual members by holding out prospects of advancement and decorations, and if this device fails, he can make the refractory members retire, and fill up their places with men of more pliant disposition. A Council constituted in this way cannot, of course, display much independence of thought or action, especially in a country like Russia, where no one ventures to oppose openly the Imperial will.

It must not, however, be supposed that the Russian ecclesiastics regard the Imperial authority with jealousy or dislike. They are all most loyal subjects, and generally warm adherents of autocracy. Those ideas of ecclesiastical independence which are so common in Western Europe, and

* Svod Zakonov I., §§ 42, 43.

that spirit of opposition to the civil power which animates the Roman Catholic clergy, are entirely foreign to their minds. If a bishop sometimes complains to an intimate friend that he has been brought to St. Petersburg and made a member of the Synod merely to append his signature to official papers and to give his consent to foregone conclusions, his displeasure is directed, not against the Emperor, but against the Procureur. He is full of loyalty and devotion to the Tsar, and has no desire to see his Majesty excluded from all influence in ecclesiastical affairs, but he feels saddened and humiliated when he finds that the whole government of the Church is in the hands of a lay functionary, who may be a military man, and who looks at all matters from a layman's point of view.

This close connection between Church and State and the thoroughly national character of the Russian Church is well illustrated by the history of the local ecclesiastical administration. The civil and the ecclesiastical administration have always had the same character and have always been modified by the same influences. The terrorism which was largely used by the Muscovite Tsars and brought to a climax by Peter the Great appeared equally in both. In the episcopal circulars, as in the Imperial ukazes, we find frequent mention of "most cruel corporal punishment," "cruel punishment with whips, so that the delinquent and others may not acquire the habit of practising such insolence," and much more of the same kind. And these terribly severe measures were sometimes directed against very venial offences. The Bishop of Vologda, for instance, in 1748 decrees "cruel corporal punishment" against priests who wear coarse and ragged clothes,* and the records of the Consistorial courts contain abundant proof that such decrees might be rigorously executed. When Catherine II. introduced a more humane spirit into the civil administration, corporal punishment was at once abolished in the Consistorial courts, and the procedure was modified according to the accepted maxims of civil jurisprudence. But I must not weary the reader with tiresome historical details. Suffice it to say that, from the time of

* Známenski, "Prikhódskoe Dukhovénstvo v Rossíi so vrémeni reformy Petrá," Kazán, 1873.

Peter the Great downwards, the character of all the more energetic sovereigns is reflected in the history of the ecclesiastical administration.

Each province, or "government," forms a diocese, and the bishop, like the civil governor, has a Council which theoretically controls his power, but practically has no controlling influence whatever. The Consistorial Council, which has in the theory of ecclesiastical procedure a very imposing appearance, is in reality the bishop's *chancellerie,* and its members are little more than secretaries, whose chief object is to make themselves agreeable to their superior. And it must be confessed that, so long as they remain what they are, the less power they possess the better it will be for those who have the misfortune to be under their jurisdiction. The higher dignitaries have at least larger aims and a certain consciousness of the dignity of their position; but the lower officials, who have no such healthy restraints and receive ridiculously small salaries, grossly misuse the little authority which they possess, and habitually pilfer and extort in the most shameless manner. The Consistories are, in fact, what the public offices were in the time of Nicholas I.

The higher ecclesiastical administration has always been in the hands of the monks, or "Black Clergy," as they are commonly termed, who form a large and influential class. The monks who first settled in Russia were, like those who first visited North-Western Europe, men of the earnest, ascetic, missionary type. Filled with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, they took little or no thought for the morrow, and devoutly believed that their Heavenly Father, without whose knowledge no sparrow falls to the ground, would provide for their humble wants. Poor, clad in rags, eating the most simple fare, and ever ready to share what they had with anyone poorer than themselves, they performed faithfully and earnestly the work which their Master had given them to do. But this ideal of monastic life soon gave way in Russia, as in the West, to practices less simple and austere. By the liberal donations and bequests of the faithful the monasteries became rich in gold, in silver, in precious stones, and above all in land and serfs. Troitsa, for instance, possessed at one time 120,000 serfs

and a proportionate amount of land, and it is said that at the beginning of the eighteenth century more than a fourth of the entire population had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Church. Many of the monasteries engaged in commerce, and the monks were, if we may credit Fletcher, who visited Russia in 1588, the most intelligent merchants of the country.

During the eighteenth century the Church lands were secularised, and the serfs of the Church became serfs of the State. This was a severe blow for the monasteries, but it did not prove fatal, as many people predicted. Some monasteries were abolished and others were reduced to extreme poverty, but many survived and prospered. These could no longer possess serfs, but they had still three sources of revenue: a limited amount of real property, Government subsidies, and the voluntary offerings of the faithful. At present there are about 500 monastic establishments, and the great majority of them, though not wealthy, have revenues more than sufficient to satisfy all the requirements of an ascetic life.

Thus in Russia, as in Western Europe, the history of monastic institutions is composed of three chapters, which may be briefly entitled: asceticism and missionary enterprise; wealth, luxury, and corruption; secularisation of property and decline. But between Eastern and Western monasticism there is at least one marked difference. The monasticism of the West made at various epochs of its history a vigorous, spontaneous effort at self-regeneration, which found expression in the foundation of separate Orders, each of which proposed to itself some special aim—some special sphere of usefulness. In Russia we find no similar phenomenon. Here the monasteries never deviated from the rules of St. Basil, which restrict the members to religious ceremonies, prayer, and contemplation. From time to time a solitary individual raised his voice against the prevailing abuses, or retired from his monastery to spend the remainder of his days in ascetic solitude; but neither in the monastic population as a whole, nor in any particular monastery, do we find at any time a spontaneous, vigorous movement towards reform. During the last two hundred years reforms

have certainly been effected, but they have all been the work of the civil power, and in the realisation of them the monks have shown little more than the virtue of resignation. Here, as elsewhere, we have evidence of that inertness, apathy, and want of spontaneous vigour which form one of the most characteristic traits of Russian national life. In this, as in other departments of national activity, the spring of action has lain not in the people, but in the Government.

It is only fair to the monks to state that in their dislike to progress and change of every kind they merely reflect the traditional spirit of the Church to which they belong. The Russian Church, like the Eastern Orthodox Church generally, is essentially conservative. Anything in the nature of a religious revival is foreign to her traditions and character. *Quieta non movere* is her fundamental principle of conduct. She prides herself on being above terrestrial influences.

The modifications that have been made in her administrative organisation have not affected her inner nature. In spirit and character she is now what she was under the Patriarchs in the time of the Muscovite Tsars, holding fast to the promise that no jot or tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled. To those who talk about the requirements of modern life and modern science she turns a deaf ear. Partly from the predominance which she gives to the ceremonial element, partly from the fact that her chief aim is to preserve unmodified the doctrine and ceremonial as determined by the early Œcumenical Councils, and partly from the low state of general culture among the clergy, she has ever remained outside of the intellectual movements. The attempts of the Roman Catholic Church to develop the traditional dogmas by definition and deduction, and the efforts of Protestants to reconcile their creeds with progressive science and the ever-varying intellectual currents of the time, are alike foreign to her nature. Hence she has produced no profound theological treatises conceived in a philosophical spirit, and has made no attempt to combat the spirit of infidelity in its modern forms. Profoundly convinced that her position is impregnable, she has "let the nations rave," and scarcely deigned to cast a glance at their intellectual and religious struggles. In a word, she is "in the world, but not of it."

If we wish to see represented in a visible form the peculiar characteristics of the Russian Church, we have only to glance at Russian religious art, and compare it with that of Western Europe. In the West, from the time of the Renaissance downwards, religious art has kept pace with artistic progress. Gradually it emancipated itself from archaic forms and childish symbolism, converted the lifeless typical figures into living individuals, lit up their dull eyes and expressionless faces with human intelligence and human feeling, and finally aimed at archæological accuracy in costume and other details. Thus in the West the Icon grew slowly into the naturalistic portrait, and the rude symbolical groups developed gradually into highly finished historical pictures. In Russia the history of religious art has been entirely different. Instead of distinctive schools of painting and great religious artists, there has been merely an anonymous traditional craft, destitute of any artistic individuality. In all the productions of this craft the old Byzantine forms have been faithfully and rigorously preserved, and we can see reflected in the modern Icons—stiff, archaic, expressionless—the immobility of the Eastern Church in general, and of the Russian Church in particular.

To the Roman Catholic, who struggles against science as soon as it contradicts traditional conceptions, and to the Protestant, who strives to bring his religious beliefs into accordance with his scientific knowledge, the Russian Church may seem to resemble an antediluvian petrifaction, or a cumbrous line-of-battle ship that has been long stranded. It must be confessed, however, that the serene inactivity for which she is distinguished has had very valuable practical consequences. The Russian clergy have neither that haughty, aggressive intolerance which characterises their Roman Catholic brethren, nor that bitter, uncharitable, sectarian spirit which is too often to be found among Protestants. They allow not only to heretics, but also to members of their own communion, the most complete intellectual freedom, and never think of anathematising anyone for his scientific or unscientific opinions. All that they demand is that those who have been born within the pale of Orthodoxy should show the Church a certain nominal allegiance;

and in this matter of allegiance they are by no means very exacting. So long as a member refrains from openly attacking the Church and from going over to another confession, he may entirely neglect all religious ordinances and publicly profess scientific theories logically inconsistent with any kind of dogmatic religious belief, without the slightest danger of incurring ecclesiastical censure.

This apathetic tolerance may be partly explained by the national character, but it is also to some extent due to the peculiar relations between Church and State. The Government vigilantly protects the Church from attack, and at the same time prevents her from attacking her enemies. Hence religious questions are never discussed in the Press, and the ecclesiastical literature is all historical, homiletic, or devotional. The authorities allow public oral discussions to be held during Lent in the Kremlin of Moscow between members of the State Church and Old Ritualists; but these debates are not theological in our sense of the term. They turn exclusively on details of Church History, and on the minutiæ of ceremonial observance.

From time to time there has been a good deal of vague talk about a possible union of the Russian and Anglican Churches. If by "union" is meant simply union in the bonds of brotherly love, there can be, of course, no objection to any amount of such *pia desideria;* but if anything more real and practical is intended, the project is an absurdity. A real union of the Russian and Anglican Churches would be as difficult of realisation, and is as undesirable, as a union of the Russian Duma and the British House of Commons.*

* I suppose that the more serious partisans of the union scheme mean union with the Eastern Orthodox, and not with the Russian, Church. To them the above remarks are not addressed. Their scheme is, in my opinion, unrealisable and undesirable, but it contains nothing absurd.

CHAPTER XX

THE NOBLESSE

HITHERTO I have been compelling the reader to move about among what we should call the lower classes—peasants, burghers, traders, parish priests, Dissenters, heretics, Cossacks, and the like—and he feels perhaps inclined to complain that he has had no opportunity of mixing with what old-fashioned people call gentlefolk and persons of quality. By way of making amends to him for this reprehensible conduct on my part, I propose now to present him to the whole Noblesse * in a body, not only those at present living, but also their near and distant ancestors, right back to the foundation of the Russian Empire a thousand years ago. Thereafter I shall introduce him to some of the County Families and invite him to make with me a few country-house visits.

In the old times, when Russia was merely a collection of some seventy independent principalities, each reigning prince was surrounded by a group of armed men, composed partly of *Boyárs*, or large landed proprietors, and partly of knights, or soldiers of fortune. These men, who formed the Noblesse of the time, were to a certain extent under the authority of the Prince, but they were by no means mere obedient, silent executors of his will. The *Boyárs* might refuse to take part in his military expeditions, and the "free lances" might leave his service and seek employment elsewhere. If he wished to go to war without their consent, they could say to him, as they did on one occasion, "You have planned this yourself, Prince, so we will not go with you, for we knew nothing of it." Nor was this resistance

* I use here a foreign, in preference to an English, term, because the word "Nobility" would convey a false impression. Etymologically the Russian word *Dvoryanín* means a Courtier (from *Dvor* = court); but this term is equally objectionable, because the great majority of the *Dvoryánstvo* have nothing to do with the Court.

to the princely will always merely passive. Once, in the principality of Galitch, the armed men seized their prince, killed his favourites, burned his mistress, and made him swear that he would in future live with his lawful wife. To his successor, who had married the wife of a priest, they spoke thus: "We have not risen against *you,* Prince, but we will not do reverence to a priest's wife: we will put her to death, and then you may marry whom you please." Even the energetic Bogolubski, one of the most remarkable of the old princes, did not succeed in having his own way. When he attempted to force the *Boyárs* he met with stubborn opposition, and was finally assassinated. From these incidents, which might be indefinitely multiplied from the old chronicles, we see that in the early period of Russian history the *Boyárs* and knights were a body of free men, possessing a considerable amount of political power.

Under the Mongol domination this political equilibrium was destroyed. When the country had been conquered, the princes became servile vassals of the Khan, and arbitrary rulers towards their own subjects. The political significance of the nobles was thereby greatly diminished. It was not, however, by any means annihilated. Though the prince no longer depended entirely on their support, he had an interest in retaining their services, to protect his territory in case of sudden attack, or to increase his possessions at the expense of his neighbours when a convenient opportunity presented itself. Theoretically, such conquests were impossible, for all removing of the ancient landmarks depended on the decision of the Khan; but in reality the Khan gave little attention to the affairs of his vassals, so long as the tribute was regularly paid; and much took place in Russia without his permission. We find, therefore, in some of the principalities the old relations still subsisting under Mongol rule. The famous Dmitri of the Don, for instance, when on his death-bed, speaks thus to his *Boyárs:* "You know my habits and my character; I was born among you, grew up among you, governed with you—fighting by your side, showing you honour and love, and placing you over towns and districts. I loved your children, and did evil to no one. I rejoiced with you in your joy, mourned with you in your

grief, and called you the princes of my land." Then, turning to his children, he adds, as a parting advice: "Love your *Boyárs,* my children; show them the honour which their services merit, and undertake nothing without their consent."

When the Grand Princes of Moscow brought the other principalities under their power, and formed them into the Tsardom of Muscovy, the nobles descended another step in the political scale. So long as there were many principalities they could quit the service of a prince as soon as he gave them reason to be discontented, knowing that they would be well received by one of his rivals; but now they had no longer any choice. The only rival of Moscow was Lithuania, and precautions were taken to prevent the discontented from crossing the Lithuanian frontier. The nobles were no longer voluntary adherents of a prince, but had become subjects of a Tsar; and the Tsars were not as the old princes had been. By a violent legal fiction they conceived themselves to be the successors of the Byzantine Emperors, and created a new court ceremonial, borrowed partly from Constantinople and partly from the Mongol Horde. They no longer associated familiarly with the *Boyárs,* and no longer asked their advice, but treated them rather as menials. When the nobles entered their august master's presence they prostrated themselves in Oriental fashion—occasionally as many as thirty times—and when they incurred his displeasure they were liable to be summarily flogged or executed, according to the Tsar's good pleasure. In succeeding to the power of the Khans, the Tsars had adopted, we see, a good deal of the Mongol system of government.

It may seem strange that a class of men, which had formerly shown a proud spirit of independence, should have submitted quietly to such humiliation and oppression without making a serious effort to curb the new power, which had no longer a Mongol Horde at its back to quell opposition. But we must remember that the nobles, as well as the princes, had passed in the meantime through the school of the Mongol domination. In the course of two centuries they had gradually become accustomed to despotic rule in the Oriental

sense. If they felt their position humiliating and irksome, they must have felt, too, how difficult it was to better it. Their only resource lay in combining against the common oppressor; and we have only to glance at the motley, disorganised group, as they cluster round the Tsar, to perceive that combination was extremely difficult. We can distinguish there the mediatised princes, still harbouring designs for the recovery of their independence; the Moscow *Boyárs,* jealous of their family honour and proud of Muscovite supremacy; Tartar *Murzi,* who have submitted to be baptised and have received land like the other nobles; the Novgorodian magnate, who cannot forget the ancient glory of his native city; Lithuanian nobles, who find it more profitable to serve the Tsar than their own sovereign; petty chiefs who have fled from the oppression of the Teutonic order; and soldiers of fortune from every part of Russia. Strong, permanent political factors are not easily formed out of such heterogeneous material.

At the end of the sixteenth century the old dynasty became extinct, and after a short period of political anarchy, commonly called "the troublous times" (*smútnoe vrémya*), the Románov family were raised to the throne by the will of the people, or at least by those who were assumed to be its representatives. By this change the Noblesse acquired a somewhat better position. They were no longer exposed to capricious tyranny and barbarous cruelty, such as they had experienced at the hands of Ivan the Terrible, but they did not, as a class, gain any political influence. There were still rival families and rival factions, but there were no political parties in the proper sense of the term, and the highest aim of families and factions was to gain the favour of the Tsar.

The frequent quarrels about precedence which took place among the rival families at this period form one of the most curious episodes of Russian history. The old patriarchal conception of the family as a unit one and indivisible was still so strong among these men that the elevation or degradation of one member of a family was considered to affect deeply the honour of all the other members. Each noble family had its rank in a recognised scale of dignity, accord-

ing to the rank which it held, or had previously held, in the Tsar's service; and a whole family would have considered itself dishonoured if one of its members accepted a post lower than that to which he was entitled. Whenever a vacant place in the service was filled up, the subordinates of the successful candidate examined the official records and the genealogical trees of their families, in order to discover whether some ancestor of their new superior had not served under one of their own ancestors. If the subordinate found such a case, he complained to the Tsar that it was not becoming for him to serve under a man who had less family honour than himself.

Unfounded complaints of this kind often entailed imprisonment or corporal punishment, but in spite of this the quarrels for precedence were very frequent. At the commencement of a campaign many such disputes were sure to arise, and the Tsar's decision was not always accepted by the party who considered himself aggrieved. I have met at least with one example of a great dignitary voluntarily mutilating his hand in order to escape the necessity of serving under a man whom he considered his inferior in family dignity. Even at the Tsar's table these rivalries sometimes produced unseemly incidents, for it was almost impossible to arrange the places so as to satisfy all the guests. In one recorded instance a noble who received a place lower than that to which he considered himself entitled openly declared to the Tsar that he would rather be condemned to death than submit to such an indignity. In another instance of a similar kind the refractory guest was put on his chair by force, but saved his family honour by slipping under the table!

The next transformation of the Noblesse was effected by Peter the Great. Peter was by nature and position an autocrat, and could brook no opposition. Having set before himself a great aim, he sought everywhere obedient, intelligent, energetic instruments to carry out his designs. He himself served the State zealously—as a common artisan, when he considered it necessary—and he insisted on all his subjects doing likewise, under pain of merciless punishment. To noble birth and long pedigrees he habitually showed a

most democratic, or rather autocratic, indifference. Intent on obtaining the service of living men, he paid no attention to the claims of dead ancestors, and gave to his servants the pay and honour which their services merited, irrespectively of birth or social position. Hence many of his chief coadjutors had no connection with the old Russian families. Count Yaguzhinski, who long held one of the most important posts in the State, was the son of a poor sacristan; Count Devier was a Portuguese by birth, and had been a cabin-boy; Baron Shafirov was a Jew; Hannibal, who died with the rank of Commander-in-Chief, was a negro who had been bought in Constantinople; and his Serene Highness Prince Ménshikov had begun life, it was said, as a baker's apprentice! For the future, noble birth was to count for nothing. The service of the State was thrown open to men of all ranks, and personal merit was to be the only claim to promotion.

This must have seemed to the Conservatives of the time a most revolutionary and reprehensible proceeding, but it did not satisfy the reforming tendencies of the great autocrat. He went a step farther, and entirely changed the legal status of the Noblesse. Down to his time the nobles were free to serve or not as they chose, and those who chose to serve enjoyed land on what we should call a feudal tenure. Some served permanently in the military or civil administration, but by far the greater number lived on their estates, and entered the active service merely when the militia was called out in view of war. This system was completely changed when Peter created a large standing army and a great centralised bureaucracy. By one of those "fell swoops" which periodically occur in Russian history, he changed the feudal into freehold tenures, and laid down the principle that all nobles, whatever their landed possessions might be, should serve the State in the army, the fleet, or the civil administration, from boyhood to old age. In accordance with this principle, any noble who refused to serve was not only deprived of his estate, as in the old times, but was declared to be a traitor and might be condemned to capital punishment.

The nobles were thus transformed into servants of the

State, and the State in the time of Peter was a hard taskmaster. They complained bitterly, and with reason, that they had been deprived of their ancient rights, and were compelled to accept quietly and uncomplainingly whatever burdens their master chose to place upon them. "Though our country," they said, "is in no danger of invasion, no sooner is peace concluded than plans are laid for a new war, which has generally no other foundation than the ambition of the Sovereign, or perhaps merely the ambition of one of his Ministers. To please him our peasants are utterly exhausted, and we ourselves are forced to leave our homes and families, not as formerly for a single campaign, but for long years. We are compelled to contract debts and to entrust our estates to thieving overseers, who commonly reduce them to such a condition that when we are allowed to retire from the service, in consequence of old age or illness, we cannot to the end of our lives retrieve our prosperity. In a word, we are so exhausted and ruined by the keeping up of a standing army, and by the consequences flowing therefrom, that the most cruel enemy, though he should devastate the whole Empire, could not cause us one-half of the injury." *

This Spartan regime, which ruthlessly sacrificed private interests to considerations of State policy, could not long be maintained in its pristine severity. It undermined its own foundations by demanding too much. Draconian laws threatening confiscation and capital punishment were of little avail. Nobles became monks, inscribed themselves as merchants, or engaged themselves as domestic servants, in order to escape their obligations. "Some," says a contemporary, "grow old in disobedience and have never once appeared in active service. . . . There is, for instance, Theodore Mokeyev. . . . In spite of the strict orders sent regarding him no one could ever catch him. Some of those sent to take him he belaboured with blows, and when he could not beat the messengers, he pretended to be dangerously ill, or feigned idiocy, and, running into the pond, stood in the water up to his neck; but as soon as the

* These complaints have been preserved by Vockerodt, a Prussian diplomatic agent of the time.

messengers were out of sight he returned home and roared like a lion."*

After Peter's death the system was gradually relaxed, but the Noblesse could not be satisfied by partial concessions. Russia had in the meantime moved, as it were, out of Asia into Europe, and had become one of the great European Powers. The upper classes had been gradually learning something of the fashions, the literature, the institutions, and the moral conceptions of Western Europe, and the nobles naturally compared the class to which they belonged with the aristocracies of Germany and France. For those who were influenced by the new foreign ideas the comparison was humiliating. In the West the Noblesse was a free and privileged class, proud of its liberty, its rights, and its culture; whereas in Russia the nobles were servants of the State, without privileges, without dignity, subject to corporal punishment, and burdened with onerous duties from which there was no escape. Thus arose in that section of the Noblesse which had some acquaintance with Western civilisation a feeling of discontent, and a desire to gain a social position similar to that of the nobles in France and Germany. These aspirations were in part realised by Peter III., who, in 1762, abolished the principle of obligatory service. His consort, Catherine II., went much farther in the same direction, and inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the *Dvoryánstvo,* a period in which its duties and obligations fell into the background, and its rights and privileges came to the front.

Catherine had good reason to favour the Noblesse. As a foreigner and a usurper, raised to the throne by a Court conspiracy, she could not awaken in the masses that semi-religious veneration which the legitimate Tsars have always enjoyed, and consequently she had to seek support in the upper classes, who were less rigid and uncompromising in their conceptions of legitimacy. She confirmed, therefore, the ukaz which abolished obligatory service of the nobles, and sought to gain their voluntary service by honours and rewards. In her manifestoes she always spoke of them in the most flattering terms, and tried to convince them that

* Posóshkov, "O skúdosti i bogátstvê."

the welfare of the country depended on their loyalty and devotion. Though she had no intention of ceding any of her political power, she formed the nobles of each province into a corporation, with periodical assemblies, which were supposed to resemble the French Provincial Parliaments, and entrusted to each of these corporations a large part of the local administration. By these and similar means, aided by her masculine energy and feminine tact, she made herself very popular, and completely changed the old conceptions about the public service. Formerly service had been looked on as a burden; now it came to be looked on as a privilege. Thousands who had retired to their estates after the publication of the liberation edict now flocked back and sought appointments, and this tendency was greatly increased by the brilliant campaigns against the Turks, which excited the patriotic feelings and gave plentiful opportunities of promotion. "Not only landed proprietors," it is said in a comedy of the time,* "but all men, even shopkeepers and cobblers, aim at becoming officers, and the man who has passed his whole life without official rank seems to be not a human being."

And Catherine did more than this. She shared the idea —generally accepted throughout Europe since the brilliant reign of Louis XIV.—that a refined, pomp-loving, pleasure-seeking Court Noblesse was not only the best bulwark of Monarchy, but also a necessary ornament of every highly civilised State; and as she ardently desired that her country should have the reputation of being highly civilised, she strove to create this national ornament. The love of French civilisation, which already existed among the upper classes of her subjects, here came to her aid, and her efforts in this direction were singularly successful. The Court of St. Petersburg became almost as brilliant, as *galant*, and as frivolous as the Court of Versailles. All who aimed at high honours adopted French fashions, spoke the French language, and affected an unqualified admiration for French classical literature. The courtiers talked of the *point d'honneur*, discussed the question as to what was consistent with the dignity of a noble, sought to display "that

* "Khvastún," by Knyazhnin.

chivalrous spirit which constitutes the pride and ornament of France," and looked back with horror on the humiliating position of their fathers and grandfathers. "Peter the Great," writes one of them, "beat all who surrounded him, without distinction of family or rank; but now, many of us would certainly prefer capital punishment to being beaten or flogged, even though the castigation were applied by the sacred hands of the Lord's Anointed."

The tone which reigned in the Court circle of St. Petersburg spread gradually towards the lower ranks of the *Dvoryánstvo*, and it seemed to superficial observers that a very fair imitation of the French Noblesse had been produced; but in reality the copy was very unlike the model. The Russian *Dvoryanín* easily learned the language and assumed the manners of the French *gentilhomme*, and succeeded in changing his physical and intellectual exterior; but all those deeper and more delicate parts of human nature which are formed by the accumulated experience of past generations could not be so easily and rapidly changed. The French *gentilhomme* of the eighteenth century was the direct descendant of the feudal baron, with the fundamental conceptions of his ancestors deeply embedded in his nature. He had not, indeed, the old haughty bearing towards the Sovereign, and his language was tinged with the fashionable democratic philosophy of the time; but he possessed a large intellectual and moral inheritance that had come down to him directly from the palmy days of feudalism—an inheritance which even the Great Revolution, which was then preparing, could not annihilate. The Russian noble, on the contrary, had received from his ancestors entirely different traditions. His father and grandfather had been conscious of the burdens rather than the privileges of the class to which they belonged. They had considered it no disgrace to receive corporal punishment, and had been jealous of their honour, not as gentlemen or descendants of *Boyárs*, but as Brigadiers, College Assessors, or Privy Counsellors. Their dignity had rested not on the grace of God, but on the will of the Tsar. Under these circumstances even the proudest magnate of Catherine's Court, though he might speak French as fluently as his mother tongue, could not

be very deeply penetrated with the conception of noble blood, the sacred character of nobility, and the numerous feudal ideas interwoven with these conceptions. And in adopting the outward forms of a foreign culture the nobles did not, it seems, gain much in true dignity. "The old pride of the nobles has fallen!" exclaims one who had more genuine aristocratic feeling than his fellows.* "There are no longer any honourable families, but merely official rank and personal merits. All seek official rank, and as all cannot render direct services, distinctions are sought by every possible means—by flattering the Monarch and toadying the important personages." There was considerable truth in this complaint, but the voice of this solitary aristocrat was as of one crying in the wilderness. The whole of the educated classes—men of old family and *parvenus* alike—were, with few exceptions, too much engrossed with place-hunting to attend to such sentimental wailing.

If the Russian Noblesse was thus in its new form but a very imperfect imitation of its French model, it was still more unlike the English aristocracy. Notwithstanding the liberal phrases in which Catherine habitually indulged, she never had the least intention of ceding one jot or tittle of her autocratic power, and the Noblesse as a class never obtained even a shadow of political influence. There was no real independence under the new airs of dignity and hauteur. In all their acts and openly expressed opinions the courtiers were guided by the real or supposed wishes of the Sovereign, and much of their political sagacity was employed in endeavouring to discover what would please her. "People never talk politics in the salons," says a contemporary witness,† "not even to praise the Government. Fear has produced habits of prudence, and the Frondeurs of the Capital express their opinions only in the confidence of intimate friendship or in a relationship still more confidential. Those who cannot bear this constraint retire to Moscow, which cannot be called the centre of opposition, for there is no such thing as opposition in a country with an autocratic Government, but which is the capital of the

* Prince Shtcherbátov.

† Ségur, long Ambassador of France at the Court of Catherine.

discontented." And even there the discontent did not venture to show itself in the Imperial presence. "In Moscow," says another witness, accustomed to the obsequiousness of Versailles, "you might believe yourself to be among republicans who have just thrown off the yoke of a tyrant, but as soon as the Court arrives you see nothing but abject slaves."*

Though thus excluded from direct influence in political affairs, the Noblesse might still have acquired a certain political significance in the State, by means of the Provincial Assemblies, and by the part they took in local administration; but in reality they had neither the requisite political experience nor the requisite patience, nor even the desire to pursue such a policy. The majority of the proprietors preferred the chances of promotion in the Imperial service to the tranquil life of a country gentleman; and those who resided permanently on their estates showed indifference or positive antipathy to everything connected with the local administration. What was officially described as "a privilege conferred on the nobles for their fidelity, and for the generous sacrifice of their lives in their country's cause," was regarded by those who enjoyed it as a new kind of obligatory service —an obligation to supply judges and officers of rural police.

If we require any additional proof that the nobles amidst all these changes were still as dependent as ever on the arbitrary will or caprice of the Monarch, we have only to glance at their position in the time of Paul I., the capricious, eccentric, violent son and successor of Catherine. The autobiographical memoirs of the time depict in vivid colours the humiliating position of even the leading men in the State, in constant fear of exciting by act, word, or look the wrath of the Sovereign. As we read these contemporary records we seem to have before us a picture of ancient Rome under the most despotic and capricious of her Emperors. Irritated and embittered before his accession to the throne by the haughty demeanour of his mother's favourites, Paul lost no opportunity of showing his contempt for aristocratic pretensions, and of humiliating those who were supposed to harbour them. "Apprenez, monsieur," he said angrily on one occasion to Dumouriez, who had accidentally referred

* Sabathier de Cabres, "Catherine II. et la Cour de Russie en 1772."

to one of the "considerable" personages of the Court, "Apprenez qu'il n'y a de considérable ici que la personne à laquelle je parle et pendant le temps que je lui parle ! " *

From the time of Catherine down to the succession of Alexander II. in 1855 no important change was made in the legal status of the Noblesse, but a gradual change took place in its social character by the continual influx of Western ideas and Western culture. The exclusively French culture in vogue at the Court of Catherine assumed a more cosmopolitan colouring, and permeated downwards till all who had any pretensions to being *civilisés* spoke French with tolerable fluency and possessed at least a superficial acquaintance with the literature of Western Europe. What chiefly distinguished them in the eye of the law from the other classes was the privilege of possessing "inhabited estates"—that is to say, estates with serfs. By the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 this valuable privilege was abolished, and about one-half of their landed property passed into the hands of the peasantry. By the administrative reforms which have since taken place, any little significance which the provincial corporations may have possessed has been annihilated. Thus at the present day the nobles are on a level with the other classes with regard to the right of possessing landed property and the administration of local affairs.

From this rapid sketch the reader will easily perceive that the Russian Noblesse has had a peculiar historical development. In Germany, France, and England the nobles were early formed into a homogeneous organised body by the political conditions in which they were placed. They had to repel the encroaching tendencies of the Monarchy on the one hand, and of the *bourgeoisie* on the other; and in this long struggle with powerful rivals they instinctively held together and developed a vigorous esprit de corps. New members penetrated into their ranks, but these intruders were so few in number that they were rapidly assimilated without modifying the general character or recognised ideals of the class, and without rudely disturbing the fiction of purity of

* This saying is often falsely attributed to Nicholas I. The anecdote is related by Ségur.

blood. The class thus assumed more and more the nature of a caste with a peculiar intellectual and moral culture, and stoutly defended its position and privileges till the ever-increasing power of the middle classes undermined its influence. Its fate in various countries has been different. In Germany it clung to its feudal traditions, and still preserves its social exclusiveness. In France it was deprived of its political influence by the Monarchy and crushed by the Revolution. In England it moderated its pretensions, allied itself with the middle classes, created under the disguise of constitutional monarchy an aristocratic republic, and conceded inch by inch, as necessity demanded, a share of its political influence to the ally that had helped it to curb the Royal power. Thus the German baron, the French *gentilhomme,* and the English nobleman represent three distinct, well-marked types; but amidst all their diversities they have much in common. They have all preserved to a greater or less extent a haughty consciousness of innate inextinguishable superiority over the lower orders, together with a more or less carefully disguised dislike for the class which has been, and still is, an aggressive rival.

The Russian Noblesse has not these characteristics. It was formed out of more heterogeneous materials, and these materials did not spontaneously combine to form an organic whole but were crushed into a conglomerate mass by the weight of the autocratic power. It never became a semi-independent factor in the State. What rights and privileges it possesses it received from the Monarchy, and consequently it has no deep-rooted jealousy or hatred of the Imperial prerogative. On the other hand, it has never had to struggle with the other social classes, and therefore it harbours towards them no feelings of rivalry or hostility. If we hear a Russian noble speak with indignation of autocracy or with acrimony of the *bourgeoisie,* we may be sure that these feelings have their source, not in traditional conceptions, but in principles learned from the modern schools of social and political philosophy. The class to which he belongs has undergone so many transformations that it has no hoary traditions or deep-rooted prejudices, and always willingly adapts itself to existing conditions. Indeed, it may be said

in general that it looks more to the future than the past, and is ever ready to accept any new ideas that wear the badge of progress. Its freedom from traditions and prejudices makes it singularly susceptible of generous enthusiasm and capable of vigorous spasmodic action, but calm moral courage and tenacity of purpose are not among its prominent attributes. In a word, we find in it neither the peculiar virtues nor the peculiar vices which are engendered and fostered by an atmosphere of political liberty.

However we may explain the fact, there is no doubt that the Russian Noblesse has little or nothing of what we call aristocratic feeling—little or nothing of that haughty, domineering, exclusive spirit which we are accustomed to associate with the word Aristocracy. We find plenty of Russians who are proud of their wealth, of their culture, or of their official position, but we rarely find a Russian who is proud of his birth or imagines that the fact of his having a long pedigree gives him any right to political privileges or social consideration. Hence there is a certain amount of truth in the oft-repeated saying that there is in reality no aristocracy in Russia.

Certainly the Noblesse as a whole cannot be called an aristocracy. If the term is to be used at all, it must be applied to a group of families which cluster around the Court and form the highest ranks of the Noblesse. This social aristocracy contains many old families, but its real basis is official rank and general culture rather than pedigree or blood. The feudal conceptions of noble birth, good family, and the like have been adopted by some of its members, but do not form one of its conspicuous features. Though habitually practising a certain exclusiveness, it has none of those characteristics of a caste which we find in the German *Adel*, and is utterly unable to understand such institutions as *Tafelfähigkeit*, by which a man who has not a pedigree of a certain length is considered unworthy to sit down at a royal table. It takes rather the English aristocracy as its model, and harbours the secret hope of one day obtaining a social and political position similar to that of the nobility and gentry of England. Though it has no peculiar legal privileges, its actual position in the Administration and at

Court gives its members great facilities for advancement in the public service. On the other hand, its semi-bureaucratic character, together with the law and custom of dividing landed property among the children at the death of their parents, deprives it of stability. New men force their way into it by official distinction, whilst many of the old families are compelled by poverty to retire from its ranks. The son of a small proprietor, or even of a parish priest, may rise to the highest offices of State, whilst the descendants of the half-mythical Rurik may descend to the position of peasants. It is said that not very long ago a certain Prince Krapotkin gained his living as a cabman in St. Petersburg!

It is evident, then, that this social aristocracy must not be confounded with the titled families. Titles do not possess the same value in Russia as in Western Europe. They are very common—because the titled families are numerous, and all the children bear their father's title, even while he is still alive—and they are by no means always associated with official rank, wealth, social position, or distinction of any kind. There are hundreds of princes and princesses who have not the right to appear at Court, and who would not be admitted into what is called in St. Petersburg "*la société*"—or, indeed, into refined society in any country.

The only genuine Russian title is *Knyaz*, commonly translated "Prince." It is borne by the descendants of Rurik, of the Lithuanian Prince Ghedimin, and of the Tartar Khans and Murzi officially recognised by the Tsars. Besides these, there are fourteen families who have adopted it by Imperial command during the last two centuries. The titles of count and baron are modern importations, beginning with the time of Peter the Great. From Peter and his successors about seventy families have received the title of count and ten that of baron. The latter are all, with two exceptions, of foreign extraction, and are mostly descended from Court bankers.*

There is a very common idea that Russian nobles are as a rule enormously rich. This is a mistake. The majority of them are poor. At the time of the Emancipation, in 1861,

* Besides these, there are of course the German counts and barons of the Baltic Provinces, who are Russian subjects.

there were 100,247 landed proprietors, and of these more than 41,000 were possessors of fewer than twenty-one male serfs—that is to say, were in a condition of poverty. A proprietor who was owner of 500 serfs was not considered as by any means very rich, and yet there were only 3,803 proprietors belonging to that category. There were a few, indeed, whose possessions were enormous. Count Sheremetiev, for instance, possessed more than 150,000 male serfs, or in other words more than 300,000 souls; and forty years ago Count Orlov-Davydov owned considerably more than half a million of acres. The Demídov family derived colossal revenues from their mines, and the Strógonovs possessed estates which, if put together, would be sufficient in extent to form a small independent State in Western Europe. The very rich families, however, are not numerous, and a large proportion of them have become impoverished during the last half-century. The lavish expenditure in which Russian nobles used to indulge indicated too frequently not large fortune, but simply foolish ostentation and reckless improvidence.

Perhaps, after having spoken so much about the past history of the Noblesse, I ought to endeavour to cast its horoscope, or at least to say something of its probable future. Though predictions are always hazardous, it is sometimes possible, by tracing the great lines of history in the past, to follow them for a little distance into the future. If it be allowable to apply this method of prediction in the present matter, I should say that the Russian *Dvoryánstvo* will assimilate with the other classes, rather than form itself into an exclusive corporation. Hereditary aristocracies may be preserved—or at least their decomposition may be retarded—where they happen to exist, but it seems that they can no longer be created. In Western Europe there is a large amount of aristocratic sentiment, both in the nobles and in the people; but it exists in spite of, rather than in consequence of, actual social conditions. It is not a product of modern society, but an heirloom that has come down to us from feudal times, when power, wealth, and culture were in the hands of a privileged few. If there ever was in Russia a period corresponding to the feudal times in Western

Europe, it has long since been forgotten. There is very little aristocratic sentiment either in the people or in the nobles, and it is difficult to imagine any source from which it could now be derived. More than this, the nobles do not desire to make such an acquisition. In so far as they have any political aspirations, they aim, with very few exceptions, at securing the political liberty of the people as a whole, and not at acquiring exclusive rights and privileges for their own class.

In that section which I have called a social aristocracy there are a few individuals who desire to gain exclusive political influence for the class to which they belong, but there is very little chance of their succeeding. If their desires were ever by chance realised, we should probably have a repetition of the scene which occurred in 1730. When in that year some of the great families raised the Duchess of Courland to the throne on condition of her ceding part of her power to a Supreme Council, the lower ranks of the Noblesse compelled her to tear up the Constitution which she had signed! Those who dislike the Autocratic Power dislike the idea of an aristocratic oligarchy infinitely more. Nobles and people alike seem to hold instinctively the creed of the French philosopher, who thought it better to be governed by a lion of good family than by a hundred rats of his own species.

Of the present condition of the Noblesse I shall again have occasion to speak when I come to consider the consequences of the Emancipation.

CHAPTER XXI

LANDED PROPRIETORS OF THE OLD SCHOOL

Of all the foreign countries in which I have travelled, Russia certainly bears off the palm in the matter of hospitality. Every spring I found myself in possession of a large number of invitations from landed proprietors in different parts of the country—far more than I could possibly accept—and a great part of the summer was generally spent in wandering about from one country house to another. I have no intention of asking the reader to accompany me in all these expeditions—for, though pleasant in reality, they might be tedious in description—but I wish to introduce him to some typical examples of the landed proprietors. Among them are to be found nearly all ranks and conditions of men, from the rich magnate, surrounded with the refined luxury of West-European civilisation, to the poor, ill-clad, ignorant owner of a few acres which barely supply him with the necessaries of life. Let us take, first of all, a few specimens from the middle ranks.

In one of the central provinces, near the bank of a sluggish, meandering stream, stands an irregular group of wooden constructions—old, unpainted, blackened by time, and surmounted by high, sloping roofs of moss-covered planks. The principal building is a long, one-storied dwelling-house, constructed at right angles to the road. At the front of the house is a spacious, ill-kept yard, and at the back an equally spacious shady garden, in which Art carries on a feeble conflict with encroaching Nature. At the other side of the yard, and facing the front door—or, rather, the front doors, for there are two—stand the stables, hay-shed, and granary, and near to that end of the house which is farthest from the road are two smaller houses, one of which is the kitchen and the other the *Lyudskáya,* or servants' apartments. Beyond these we can perceive, through a single

row of lime-trees, another group of time-blackened wooden constructions in a still more dilapidated condition. That is the farmyard.

There is certainly not much symmetry in the disposition of these buildings, but there is nevertheless a certain order and meaning in the apparent chaos. All the buildings which do not require stoves are built at a considerable distance from the dwelling-house and kitchen, which are more liable to take fire; and the kitchen stands by itself, because the odour of cookery, in which oil is copiously used, is by no means agreeable, even for those whose olfactory nerves are not very sensitive. The plan of the house is likewise not without a certain meaning. The rigorous separation of the sexes, which formed a characteristic trait of old Russian society, has long since disappeared, but its influence may still be traced in houses built on the old model. The house in question is one of these, and consequently it is composed of three sections—at the one end the male apartments, at the other the female apartments, and in the middle the neutral territory, comprising the dining-room and the *salon*. This arrangement has its conveniences, and explains the fact that the house has two front doors. At the back is a third door, which opens from the neutral territory into a spacious veranda overlooking the garden.

Here lives, and has lived for many years, Ivan Ivanovitch K——, a gentleman of the old school, and a very worthy man of his kind. If we look at him as he sits in his comfortable arm-chair, with his capacious dressing-gown hanging loosely about him, we shall be able to read at a glance something of his character. Nature endowed him with large bones and broad shoulders, and evidently intended him to be a man of great muscular power, but he has contrived to frustrate this benevolent intention, and has now more fat than muscle. His close-cropped head is round as a bullet, and his features are massive and heavy, but the heaviness is relieved by an expression of calm contentment and imperturbable good-nature, which occasionally blossoms into a broad grin. His face is one of those on which no amount of histrionic talent could produce a look of care and anxiety; and for this it is not to blame, for such an expression has

never been demanded of it. Like other mortals he sometimes experiences little annoyances, and on such occasions his small grey eyes sparkle and his face becomes suffused with a crimson glow that suggests apoplexy; but ill-fortune has never been able to get sufficiently firm hold of him to make him understand what such words as care and anxiety mean. Of struggle, disappointment, hope, and all the other feelings which give to human life a dramatic interest, he knows little by hearsay and nothing by experience. He has, in fact, always lived outside of that struggle for existence which modern philosophers declare to be the law of Nature.

Somewhere about seventy years ago Ivan Ivan'itch was born in the house where he still lives. His first lessons he received from the parish priest, and afterwards he was taught by a deacon's son who had studied in the ecclesiastical seminary to so little purpose that he was unable to pass the final examination. By both of these teachers he was treated with extreme leniency, and was allowed to learn as little as he chose. His father wished him to study hard, but his mother was afraid that study might injure his health, and accordingly gave him several holidays every week. Under these circumstances his progress was naturally not very rapid, and he was still very slightly acquainted with the elementary rules of arithmetic when his father one day declared that he was already eighteen years of age, and must at once enter the service. But what kind of service? Ivan had no natural inclination for any kind of activity. The project of entering him as a *Junker* in a cavalry regiment, the colonel of which was an old friend of the family, did not at all please him. He had no love for military service, and positively disliked the prospect of an examination. Whilst seeming, therefore, to bow implicitly to the paternal authority, he induced his mother to oppose the scheme.

The dilemma in which Ivan found himself was this: in deference to his father he wished to be in the service and to gain that official rank which every Russian noble desires to possess, and at the same time, in deference to his mother and his own tastes, he wished to remain at home and continue his indolent mode of life. The Marshal of Noblesse, who happened to call one day, helped him out of the difficulty

by offering to inscribe him as secretary in the *Dvoryánskaya Opéka,* a bureau which acts as curator for the estates of minors. All the duties of this office could be fulfilled by a paid secretary, and the nominal occupant would be periodically promoted as if he were an active official. This was precisely what Ivan required. He accepted eagerly the proposal, and obtained, in the course of seven years, without any effort on his part, the rank of "collegiate secretary," corresponding to the "capitaine-en-second" of the military hierarchy. To mount higher he would have had to seek some place where he could not have fulfilled his duty by proxy, so he determined to rest on his laurels, and sent in his resignation.

Immediately after the termination of his official life his married life began. Before his resignation had been accepted he suddenly found himself one morning on the high road to matrimony. Here again there was no effort on his part. The course of true love, which is said never to run smooth for ordinary mortals, ran smooth for him. He never had even the trouble of proposing. The whole affair was arranged by his parents, who chose as bride for their son the only daughter of their nearest neighbour. The young lady was only about sixteen years of age, and was not remarkable for beauty, talent, or any other peculiarity, but she had one very important qualification—she was the daughter of a man who had an estate contiguous to their own, and who might give as a dowry a certain bit of land which they had long desired to add to their own property. The negotiations, being of a delicate nature, were entrusted to an old lady who had a great reputation for diplomatic skill in such matters, and she accomplished her mission with such success that in the course of a few weeks the preliminaries were arranged and the day fixed for the wedding. Thus Ivan Ivan'itch won his bride as easily as he had won his *tchin* of "collegiate secretary."

Though the bridegroom had received rather than taken to himself a wife, and did not imagine for a moment that he was in love, he had no reason to regret the choice that was made for him. Maria Petrovna was exactly suited by character and education to be the wife of a man like Ivan

Ivan'itch. She had grown up at home in the society of nurses and maidservants, and had never learned anything more than could be obtained from the parish priest and from "Ma'mselle," a personage occupying a position midway between a maidservant and a governess. The first events of her life were the announcement that she was to be married and the preparations for the wedding. She still remembers the delight which the purchase of her trousseau afforded her, and keeps in her memory a full catalogue of the articles bought. The first years of her married life were not very happy, for she was treated by her mother-in-law as a naughty child who required to be frequently snubbed and lectured; but she bore the discipline with exemplary patience, and in due time became her own mistress and autocratic ruler in all domestic affairs. From that time she has lived an active, uneventful life. Between her and her husband there is as much mutual attachment as can reasonably be expected in phlegmatic natures after nearly half a century of matrimony. She has always devoted her energies to satisfying his simple material wants—of intellectual wants he has none—and securing his comfort in every possible way. Under this fostering care he "effeminated himself" (*obábilsya*), as he is wont to say. His love of shooting died out, he cared less and less to visit his neighbours, and each successive year he spent more and more time in his arm-chair.

The daily life of this worthy couple is singularly regular and monotonous, varying only with the changing seasons. In summer Ivan Ivan'itch gets up about seven o'clock, and puts on, with the assistance of his *valet de chambre*, a simple costume, consisting chiefly of a faded, plentifully stained dressing-gown. Having nothing particular to do, he sits down at the open window and looks into the yard. As the servants pass he stops and questions them, and then gives them orders, or scolds them, as circumstances demand. Towards nine o'clock tea is announced, and he goes into the dining-room—a long, narrow apartment with bare wooden floor and no furniture but a table and chairs, all in a more or less rickety condition. Here he finds his wife with the tea-urn before her. In a few minutes the grandchildren come in, kiss their grandpapa's hand, and take

their places round the table. As this morning meal consists merely of bread and tea, it does not last long; and all disperse to their several occupations. The head of the house begins the labours of the day by resuming his seat at the open window. When he has smoked some cigarettes and indulged in a proportionate amount of silent contemplation, he goes out with the intention of visiting the stables and farmyard, but generally before he has crossed the court he finds the heat unbearable, and returns to his former position by the open window. Here he sits tranquilly till the sun has so far moved round that the veranda at the back of the house is completely in the shade, when he has his arm-chair removed thither, and sits there till dinner-time.

Maria Petrovna spends her morning in a more active way. As soon as the breakfast-table has been cleared, she goes to the larder, takes stock of the provisions, arranges the *menu du jour*, and gives to the cook the necessary materials, with detailed instructions as to how they are to be prepared. The rest of the morning she devotes to her other household duties.

Towards one o'clock dinner is announced, and Ivan Ivan'itch prepares his appetite by swallowing at a gulp a wine-glassful of home-made bitters. Dinner is the great event of the day. The food is abundant and of good quality, but mushrooms, onions, and fat play a rather too important part in the repast, and the whole is prepared with very little attention to the recognised principles of culinary hygiene. Many of the dishes, indeed, would make a British valetudinarian stand aghast, but they seem to produce no bad effect on those Russian organisms which have never been weakened by town life, nervous excitement, or intellectual exertion.

No sooner has the last dish been removed than a death-like stillness falls upon the house: it is the time of the after-dinner siesta. The young folks go into the garden, and all the other members of the household give way to the drowsiness naturally engendered by a heavy meal on a hot summer day. Ivan Ivan'itch retires to his own room, from which the flies have been carefully expelled. Maria Petrovna dozes in an arm-chair in the sitting-room, with a pocket-

handkerchief spread over her face. The servants snore in the corridors, the garret, or the hay-shed; and even the old watch-dog in the corner of the yard stretches himself out at full length on the shady side of his kennel.

In about two hours the house gradually re-awakens. Doors begin to creak; the names of various servants are bawled out in all tones, from bass to falsetto; and footsteps are heard in the yard. Soon a manservant issues from the kitchen bearing an enormous tea-urn, which puffs like a little steam-engine. The family assemble for tea. In Russia, as elsewhere, sleep after a heavy meal produces thirst, so that the tea and other beverages are very acceptable. Then some little delicacies are served—such as fruit and wild berries, or cucumbers with honey, or something else of the kind—and the family again disperses. Ivan Ivan'itch takes a turn in the fields on his *begovuiya droshki*—an extremely light vehicle composed of two pairs of wheels joined together by a single board, on which the driver sits stride-legged; and Maria Petrovna probably receives a visit from the *Popadyà* (the priest's wife), who is the chief gossipmonger of the neighbourhood. There is not much scandal in the district, but what little there is the *Popadyà* carefully collects, and distributes among her acquaintances with undiscriminating generosity.

In the evening it often happens that a little group of peasants come into the court, and ask to see the "master." The master goes to the door, and generally finds that they have some favour to request. In reply to his question, "Well, children, what do you want?" they tell their story in a confused, rambling way, several of them speaking at a time, and he has to question and cross-question them before he comes to understand clearly what they desire. If he tells them he cannot grant it, they probably do not accept a first refusal, but endeavour by means of supplication to make him reconsider his decision. Stepping forward a little, and bowing low, one of the group begins in a half-respectful, half-familiar, caressing tone: "Little Father, Ivan Ivan'itch, be gracious; you are our father, and we are your children" —and so on. Ivan Ivan'itch good-naturedly listens, and again explains that he cannot grant what they ask; but they

still have hopes of gaining their point by entreaty, and continue their supplications till at last his patience is exhausted and he says to them in a paternal tone, "Now, enough!, enough! you are blockheads—blockheads all round! There's no use talking; it can't be done." And with these words he enters the house, so as to prevent all further discussion.

A regular part of the evening's occupation is the interview with the steward. The work that has just been done, and the programme for the morrow, are always discussed at great length; and much time is spent in speculating as to the weather during the next few days. On this latter point the calendar is always carefully consulted, and great confidence is placed in its predictions, though past experience has often shown that they are not to be implicitly trusted. The conversation drags on till supper is announced, and immediately after that meal, which is an abridged repetition of dinner, all retire for the night.

Thus pass the days and weeks and months in the house of Ivan Ivan'itch, and rarely is there any deviation from the ordinary programme. The climate necessitates, of course, some slight modifications. When it is cold, the doors and windows have to be kept shut, and after heavy rains those who do not like to wade in mud have to remain in the house or garden. In the long winter evenings the family assemble in the sitting-room, and all kill time as they best can. Ivan Ivan'itch smokes and meditates, or listens to the barrel-organ played by one of the children. Maria Petrovna knits a stocking. The old aunt, who commonly spends the winter with them, plays patience, and sometimes draws from the game conclusions as to the future. Her favourite predictions are that a stranger will arrive, or that a marriage will take place, and she can determine the sex of the stranger and the colour of the bridegroom's hair; but beyond this her art does not go, and she cannot satisfy the young ladies' curiosity as to further details.

Books and newspapers are rarely seen in the sitting-room, but for those who wish to read there is a bookcase full of miscellaneous literature, which gives some idea of the literary tastes of the family during several generations. The oldest

volumes were bought by Ivan Ivan'itch's grandfather—a man who, according to the family traditions, enjoyed the confidence of the great Catherine. Though wholly overlooked by recent historians, he was evidently a man who had some pretensions to culture. He had his portrait painted by a foreign artist of considerable talent—it still hangs in the sitting-room—and he bought several pieces of Sèvres ware, the last of which stands on a commode in the corner and contrasts strangely with the rude home-made furniture and squalid appearance of the apartment. Among the books which bear his name are the tragedies of Sumarókov, who imagined himself to be "the Russian Voltaire"; the amusing comedies of Von-Wisin, some of which still keep the stage; the loud-sounding odes of the courtly Derzhávin; two or three books containing the mystic wisdom of Freemasonry as interpreted by Schwarz and Novikov; Russian translations of Richardson's "Pamela," "Sir Charles Grandison," and "Clarissa Harlowe"; Rousseau's "Nouvelle Héloïse," in Russian garb; and three or four volumes of Voltaire in the original. Among the works collected at a somewhat later period are translations of Ann Radcliffe, of Scott's early novels, and of Ducray Duménil, whose stories, "Lolotte et Fanfan" and "Victor," once enjoyed a great reputation. At this point the literary tastes of the family appear to have died out, for the succeeding literature is represented exclusively by Krylov's Fables, a farmer's manual, a handbook of family medicine, and a series of calendars. There are, however, some signs of a revival, for on the lowest shelf stand recent editions of Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gógol, and a few works by living authors.

Sometimes the monotony of the winter is broken by visiting neighbours and receiving visitors in return, or in a more decided way by a visit of a few days to the capital of the province. In the latter case Maria Petrovna spends nearly all her time in shopping, and brings home a large collection of miscellaneous articles. The inspection of these by the assembled family forms an important domestic event, which completely throws into the shade the occasional visits of pedlars and colporteurs. Then there are the festivities at Christmas and Easter, and occasionally little incidents

of a less agreeable kind. It may be that there is a heavy fall of snow, so that it is necessary to cut roads to the kitchen and stables; or wolves enter the courtyard at night and have a fight with the watch-dogs; or the news is brought that a peasant who had been drinking in a neighbouring village has been found frozen to death on the road.

Altogether the family live a very isolated life, but they have one bond of connection with the great outer world. Two of the sons are officers in the army, and both of them write home occasionally to their mother and sisters. To these two youths is devoted all the little stock of sentimentality which Maria Petrovna possesses. She can talk of them by the hour to anyone who will listen to her, and has related to the *Popadyà* a hundred times every trivial incident of their lives. Though they have never given her much cause for anxiety, and they are now men of middle age, she lives in constant fear that some evil may befall them. What she most fears is that they may be sent on a campaign or may fall in love with actresses. War and actresses are, in fact, the two bugbears of her existence, and whenever she has a disquieting dream she asks the priest to offer up a *molében* for the safety of her absent ones. Sometimes she ventures to express her anxiety to her husband, and recommends him to write to them; but he considers writing a letter a very serious bit of work, and always replies evasively, "Well, well, we must think about it."

During the Crimean War, Ivan Ivan'itch half awoke from his habitual lethargy, and read occasionally the meagre official reports published by the Government. He was a little surprised that no great victories were reported, and that the army did not at once advance on Constantinople. As to causes he never speculated. Some of his neighbours told him that the army was disorganised, and the whole system of Nicholas had been proved to be utterly worthless. That might all be very true, but he did not understand military and political matters. No doubt it would all come right in the end. All did come right, after a fashion, and he again gave up reading newspapers; but ere long he was startled by reports much more alarming than any rumours of war. People began to talk about the peasant question,

and to say openly that the serfs must soon be emancipated. For once in his life Ivan Ivan'itch asked explanations. Finding one of his neighbours, who had always been a respectable, sensible man, and a severe disciplinarian, talking in this way, he took him aside and asked what it all meant. The neighbour explained that the old order of things had shown itself bankrupt and was doomed, that a new epoch was opening, that everything was to be reformed, and that the Emperor, in accordance with a secret clause of the Treaty with the Allies, was about to grant a Constitution! Ivan Ivan'itch listened for a little in silence, and then, with a gesture of impatience, interrupted the speaker: "Polno durátchitsya!" (Enough of fun and tomfoolery.) "Vassili Petróvitch, tell me seriously what you mean."

When Vassili Petróvitch vowed that he spoke in all seriousness, his friend gazed at him with a look of intense compassion, and remarked, as he turned away, "So you, too, have gone out of your mind!"

The utterances of Vassili Petróvitch, which his lethargic, sober-minded friend regarded as indicating temporary insanity in the speaker, represented fairly the mental condition of very many Russian nobles at that time, and were not without a certain foundation. The idea about a secret clause in the Treaty of Paris was purely imaginary, but it was quite true that the country was entering on an epoch of great reforms, among which the Emancipation question occupied the chief place. Of this even the sceptical Ivan Ivan'itch was soon convinced. Alexander II., the son and successor of Nicholas, declared in a formal speech to the Noblesse of the province of Moscow that the actual state of things could not continue for ever, and called on the landed proprietors to consider by what means the condition of their serfs might be ameliorated. Provincial committees were accordingly formed for the purpose of preparing definite projects, and gradually it became apparent that the emancipation of the serfs was really at hand.

Ivan Ivan'itch was alarmed at the prospect of losing his authority over his serfs. Though he had never been a cruel taskmaster, he had not spared the rod when he considered it necessary, and he believed birch-twigs to be a necessary

instrument in the Russian system of agriculture. For some time he drew consolation from the thought that peasants were not birds of the air, that they must under all circumstances require food and clothing, and that they would be ready to serve him as agricultural labourers; but when he learned that they were to receive a large part of the estate for their own use, his hopes fell, and he greatly feared that he would be inevitably ruined.

These dark forebodings were not by any means realised. His serfs were emancipated and received about a half of the estate, but in return for the land ceded they paid him annually a considerable sum, and they were always ready to cultivate his fields for a fair remuneration. The yearly outlay was considerably greater, but the price of grain rose, and this counterbalanced the additional yearly expenditure. The administration of the estate became much less patriarchal; much that had been left to custom and tacit understanding was regulated by express agreement on purely commercial principles; a great deal more money was paid out and a great deal more received; there was much less authority in the hands of the master, and his responsibilities were proportionately diminished; but in spite of all these changes, Ivan Ivan'itch would have great difficulty in deciding whether he is a richer or a poorer man. He has fewer horses and fewer servants, but he has still more than he requires, and his mode of life has undergone no perceptible alteration. Maria Petrovna complains that she is no longer supplied with eggs, chickens, and home-spun linen by the peasants, and that everything is three times as dear as it used to be; but somehow the larder is still full, and abundance reigns in the house as of old.

Ivan Ivan'itch certainly does not possess transcendent qualities of any kind. It would be impossible to make a hero out of him, even though his own son should be his biographer. Muscular Christians may reasonably despise him, and active, energetic men may fairly condemn him for his indolence and apathy. But, on the other hand, he has no very bad qualities. His vices are of the passive, negative kind. He is a respectable if not distinguished member of society, and appears a very worthy man when

compared with many of his neighbours who have been brought up in similar conditions. Take, for instance, his younger brother Dimítri, who lives a short way off.

Dimítri Ivan'itch, like his brother Ivan, had been endowed by Nature with a very decided repugnance to prolonged intellectual exertion, but as he was a man of good parts he did not fear a *Junker's* examination—especially when he could count on the colonel's protection—and accordingly entered the army. In his regiment were a number of jovial young officers like himself, always ready to relieve the monotony of garrison life by boisterous dissipation, and among these he easily acquired the reputation of being a thoroughly good fellow. In drinking-bouts he could hold his own with the best of them, and in all mad pranks invariably played the chief part. By this means he endeared himself to his comrades, and for a time all went well. The colonel had himself sown wild oats plentifully in his youth, and was quite disposed to overlook, as far as possible, the bacchanalian peccadilloes of his subordinates. But before many years had passed, the regiment suddenly changed its character. Certain rumours had reached head-quarters, and the Emperor Nicholas appointed as colonel a stern disciplinarian of German origin, who aimed at making the regiment a kind of machine that should work with the accuracy of a chronometer.

This change did not at all suit the tastes of Dimítri Ivan'itch. He chafed under the new restraints, and as soon as he had gained the rank of lieutenant retired from the service to enjoy the freedom of country life. Shortly afterwards his father died, and he thereby became owner of an estate, with two hundred serfs. He did not, like his elder brother, marry, and "effeminate himself," but he did worse. In his little independent kingdom—for such was practically a Russian estate in the good old times—he was lord of all he surveyed, and gave full scope to his boisterous humour, his passion for sport, and his love of drinking and dissipation. Many of the mad pranks in which he indulged will long be preserved by popular tradition, but they cannot well be related here.

Dimítri Ivan'itch is now a man long past middle age,

and still continues his wild, dissipated life. His house resembles an ill-kept, disreputable tavern. The floor is filthy, the furniture chipped and broken, the servants indolent, slovenly, and in rags. Dogs of all breeds and sizes roam about the rooms and corridors. The master, when not asleep, is always in a more or less complete state of intoxication. Generally he has one or two guests staying with him—men of the same type as himself—and days and nights are spent in drinking and card-playing. When he cannot have his usual boon-companions he sends for one or two small proprietors who live near—men who are legally nobles, but who are so poor that they differ little from peasants. Formerly, when ordinary resources failed, he occasionally had recourse to the violent expedient of ordering his servants to stop the first passing travellers, whoever they might be, and bring them in by persuasion or force, as circumstance might demand. If the travellers refused to accept such rough, undesired hospitality, a wheel would be taken off their *tarantass,* or some indispensable part of the harness would be secreted, and they might consider themselves fortunate if they succeeded in getting away next morning.*

In the time of serfage the domestic serfs had much to bear from their capricious, violent master. They lived in an atmosphere of abusive language, and were subjected not unfrequently to corporal punishment. Worse than this, their master was constantly threatening to "shave their forehead"—that is to say, to give them as recruits—and occasionally he put his threat into execution, in spite of the wailings and entreaties of the culprit and his relations. And yet, strange to say, nearly all of them remained with him as free servants after the Emancipation.

In justice to the Russian landed proprietors I must say that the class represented by Dimítri Ivan'itch has now practically disappeared. It was the natural result of serfage and social stagnation—of a state of society in which there

* This custom has fortunately gone out of fashion even in outlying districts, but an incident of the kind happened to a friend of mine as late as 1871. He was detained against his will for two whole days by a man whom he had never seen before, and at last effected his escape by bribing the servants of his tyrannical host.

were few legal and moral restraints, and few inducements to honourable activity.

Among the other landed proprietors of the district, one of the best known is Nicolaï Petróvitch B——, an old military man with the rank of general. Like Ivan Ivan'itch, he belongs to the old school; but the two men must be contrasted rather than compared. The difference in their lives and characters is reflected in their outward appearance. Ivan Ivan'itch, as we know, is portly in form and heavy in all his movements, and loves to loll in his arm-chair or to loaf about the house in a capacious dressing-gown. The General, on the contrary, is thin, wiry, and muscular, wears habitually a close-buttoned military tunic, and always has a stern expression, the force of which is considerably augmented by a bristly moustache resembling a shoe-brush. As he paces up and down the room, knitting his brows and gazing at the floor, he looks as if he were forming combinations of the first magnitude; but those who know him well are aware that this is an optical delusion, of which he is himself to some extent a victim. He is quite innocent of deep thought and concentrated intellectual effort. Though he frowns so fiercely he is by no means of a naturally ferocious temperament. Had he passed all his life in the country he would probably have been as good-natured and phlegmatic as Ivan Ivan'itch himself, but, unlike that worshipper of tranquillity, he had aspired to rise in the service, and had adopted the stern, formal bearing which the Emperor Nicholas considered indispensable in an officer. The manner which he had at first put on as part of his uniform became by the force of habit almost a part of his nature, and at the age of thirty he was a stern disciplinarian and uncompromising formalist, who confined his attention exclusively to drill and other military duties. Thus he rose steadily by his own merit, and reached the goal of his early ambition—the rank of general.

As soon as this point was reached he determined to leave the service and retire to his estate. Many considerations urged him to take this step. He enjoyed the title of Excellency, which he had long coveted, and when he put on his full uniform his breast was bespangled with medals and

decorations. Since the death of his father the revenues of his property had been steadily decreasing, and report said that the best wood in his forest was rapidly disappearing. His wife had no love for the country, and would have preferred to settle in Moscow or St. Petersburg, but they found that with their small income they could not live in a large town in a style suitable to their rank.

The General determined to introduce order into his estate, and became a practical farmer; but a little experience convinced him that his new functions were much more difficult than the commanding of a regiment. He has long since given over the practical management of the property to a steward, and he contents himself with exercising what he imagines to be an efficient control. Though he wishes to do much, he finds small scope for his activity, and spends his days in pretty much the same way as Ivan Ivan'itch, with this difference, that he plays cards whenever he gets an opportunity, and reads regularly the *Moscow Gazette* and the *Russki Invalid,* the official military paper. What specially interests him is the list of promotions, retirements, and Imperial awards for merit and seniority. When he sees the announcement that some old comrade has been made an officer of his Majesty's suite or has received *a grand cordon,* he frowns a little more than usual, and is tempted to regret that he retired from the service. Had he waited patiently, perhaps a bit of good fortune might have fallen likewise to his lot. This idea takes possession of him, and during the remainder of the day he is taciturn and morose. His wife notices the change, and knows the reason of it, but has too much good sense and tact to make any allusion to the subject.

Anna Alexándrovna—so the good lady is called—is an elderly dame who does not at all resemble the wife of Ivan Ivan'itch. She was long accustomed to a numerous military society, with dinner-parties, dancing, promenades, card-playing, and all the other amusements of garrison life, and she never contracted a taste for domestic concerns. Her knowledge of culinary affairs is extremely vague, and she has no idea of how to make preserves, *nalivka,* and other home-made delicacies, though Maria Petrovna, who is

universally acknowledged to be a great adept in such matters, has proposed a hundred times to give her some choice recipes. In short, domestic affairs are a burden to her, and she entrusts them as far as possible to the housekeeper. Altogether she finds country life very tiresome, but, possessing that placid, philosophical temperament which seems to have some causal connection with corpulence, she submits without murmuring, and tries to lighten a little the unavoidable monotony by paying visits and receiving visitors. The neighbours within a radius of twenty miles are, with few exceptions, more or less of the Ivan Ivan'itch and Maria Petrovna type—decidedly rustic in their manners and conceptions; but their company is better than absolute solitude, and they have at least the good quality of being always able and willing to play cards for any number of hours. Besides this, Anna Alexándrovna has the satisfaction of feeling that amongst them she is almost a great personage, and unquestionably an authority in all matters of taste and fashion; and she feels especially well disposed towards those of them who frequently address her as "Your Excellency."

The chief festivities take place on the "name-days" of the General and his spouse—that is to say, the days sacred to St. Nicholas and St. Anne. On these occasions all the neighbours come to offer their congratulations, and remain to dinner as a matter of course. After dinner the older visitors sit down to cards, and the young people extemporise a dance. The fête is especially successful when the eldest son comes home to take part in it, and brings a brother officer with him. He is now a general like his father.* In days gone by one of his comrades was expected to offer his hand to Olga Nikolaevna, the second daughter, a delicate young lady who had been educated in one of the great "Instituts"—gigantic boarding-schools, founded and kept up by the Government, for the daughters of those who are supposed to have deserved well of their country.* Unfortunately the expected offer was never made, and she and her sister live at home as old maids, bewailing the absence of "civilised"

* Generals are much more common in Russia than in other countries. A few years ago there was an old lady in Moscow who had a family of ten sons, all of whom were generals! The rank may be obtained in the civil as well as the military service.

society, and killing time in a harmless, elegant way by means of music, needlework, and light literature.

At those "name-day" gatherings one used to meet still more interesting specimens of the old school. One of them I remember particularly. He was a tall, corpulent old man, in a threadbare frock-coat which wrinkled up about his waist. His shaggy eyebrows almost covered his small, dull eyes, his heavy moustache partially concealed a large mouth, strongly indicating sensuous tendencies. His hair was cut so short that it was difficult to say what its colour would have been if it had been allowed to grow. He always arrived in his *tarantass* just in time for the *zakuska*—the appetising collation that is served shortly before dinner—grunted out a few congratulations to the host and hostess and monosyllabic greetings to his acquaintances, ate a copious meal, and immediately afterwards placed himself at a card-table, where he sat in silence as long as he could get anyone to play with him. People did not like, however, to play with Andrei Vassil'itch, for his society was not agreeable, and he always contrived to go home with a well-filled purse.

Andrei Vassil'itch was a noted man in the neighbourhood. He was the centre of a whole cycle of legends, and I have often heard that his name was used with effect by nurses to frighten naughty children. I never missed an opportunity of meeting him, for I was curious to see and study a legendary monster in the flesh. How far the numerous stories told about him were true I cannot pretend to say, but they were certainly not without foundation. In his youth he had served for some time in the army, and was celebrated, even in an age when martinets had always a good chance of promotion, for his brutality to his subordinates. His career was cut short, however, when he had only the rank of captain. Having compromised himself in some way, he found it advisable to send in his resignation and retire to his estate. Here he organised his house on Mahometan rather than Christian principles, and ruled his servants and peasants as he had been accustomed to rule his soldiers—using corporal punishment in merciless fashion. His wife did not venture to protest against the Mahometan arrangements, and any peasant who stood in the way of

their realisation was at once given as a recruit, or transported to Siberia, in accordance with his master's demand.* At last his tyranny and extortion drove his serfs to revolt. One night his house was surrounded and set on fire, but he contrived to escape the fate that was prepared for him, and caused all who had taken part in the revolt to be mercilessly punished. This was a severe lesson, but it had no effect upon him. Taking precautions against a similar surprise, he continued to tyrannise and extort as before, until in 1861 the serfs were emancipated and his authority came to an end.

A very different sort of man was Pavel Trophim'itch, who likewise came regularly to pay his respects and present his congratulations to the General and "Gheneralsha." † It was pleasant to turn from the hard, wrinkled, morose features of the legendary monster to the soft, smooth, jovial face of this man, who had been accustomed to look at the bright side of things till his face had caught something of their brightness. "A good, jovial, honest face!" a stranger might exclaim as he looked at him. Knowing something of his character and history, I could not endorse such an opinion. Jovial he certainly was, for few men were more capable of making and enjoying mirth. Good he might be also called, if the word were taken in the sense of good-natured, for he never took offence, and was always ready to do a kindly action if it did not cost him any trouble. But as to his honesty, that required some qualification. Wholly untarnished his reputation certainly could not be, for he had been a judge in the District Court before the time of the judicial reforms; and, not being a Cato, he had succumbed to the usual temptations. He had never studied law, and made no pretensions to the possession of great legal knowledge. To all who would listen to him he declared openly that he knew much more about pointers and setters than about legal formalities. But his estate

* When a proprietor considered any of his serfs unruly he could, according to law, have them transported to Siberia without trial, on condition of paying the expenses of transport. Arrived at their destination, they received land, and lived as free colonists, with the single restriction that they were not allowed to leave the locality where they settled.

† The female form of the word General.

was very small, and he could not afford to give up his appointment.

Of these unreformed Courts, which are happily among the things of the past, I shall have occasion to speak in the sequel. For the present I wish merely to say that they were thoroughly corrupt, and I hasten to add that Pavel Trophim'itch was by no means a judge of the worst kind. He had been known to protect widows and orphans against those who wished to despoil them, and no amount of money would induce him to give an unjust decision against a friend who had privately explained the case to him; but when he knew nothing of the case or of the parties he readily signed the decision prepared by the secretary, and quietly pocketed the proceeds, without feeling any very disagreeable twinges of conscience. All judges, he knew, did likewise, and he had no pretension to being better than his fellows.

When Pavel Trophim'itch played cards at the General's house or elsewhere, a small, awkward, clean-shaven man, with dark eyes and a Tartar cast of countenance, might generally be seen sitting at the same table. His name was Alexei Petróvitch T——. Whether he really had any Tartar blood in him it is impossible to say, but certainly his ancestors for one or two generations were all good Orthodox Christians. His father had been a poor military surgeon in a marching regiment, and he himself had become at an early age a scribe in one of the bureaux of the district town. He was then very poor, and had great difficulty in supporting life on the miserable pittance which he received as a salary; but he was a sharp, clever youth, and soon discovered that even a scribe had a great many opportunities of extorting money from the ignorant public.

These opportunities Alexei Petróvitch used with great ability, and became known as one of the most accomplished bribe-takers (*vzyátotchniki*) in the district. His position, however, was so very subordinate that he would never have become rich had he not fallen upon a very ingenious expedient which completely succeeded. Hearing that a small proprietor, who had an only daughter, had come to live in the town for a few weeks, he took a room in the inn where the new-comers lived, and when he had made their acquaint-

ance he fell dangerously ill. Feeling his last hours approaching, he sent for a priest, confided to him that he had amassed a large fortune, and requested that a will should be drawn up. In the will he bequeathed considerable sums to all his relations, and did not forget the parish church. The whole affair was to be kept a secret till after his death, but his neighbour—the old gentleman with the daughter—was called in to act as a witness. When all this had been done he did not die, but rapidly recovered, and now induced the old gentleman to whom he had confided his secret to grant him his daughter's hand. The daughter had no objections to marry a man possessed of such wealth, and the marriage was duly celebrated. Shortly after this the father died—without discovering, it is to be hoped, the hoax that had been perpetrated—and Alexei Petróvitch became virtual possessor of a very comfortable little estate. With the change in his fortunes he completely changed his principles, or at least his practice. In all his dealings he was now strictly honest. He lent money, it is true, at from ten to fifteen per cent., but that was considered in these parts not a very exorbitant rate of interest, nor was he unnecessarily hard upon his debtors.

It may seem strange that an honourable man like the General should receive in his house such a motley company, including men of decidedly tarnished reputation; but in this respect he was not at all peculiar. One used constantly to meet in Russian provincial society men who were known to be habitually guilty of corrupt practices; and the honest, respectable landed proprietor had no scruples about associating with such neighbours on friendly terms. This social leniency, moral laxity, or whatever else it may be called, was the result of various causes. Several concurrent influences had tended to lower the moral standard of the Noblesse. So long as serfage existed, the noble who lived on his estate could play with impunity the petty tyrant, and could freely indulge his legitimate and illegitimate caprices without any legal or moral restraint. I do not at all mean to assert that all proprietors abused their authority, but I venture to say that no class of men can long possess such enormous arbitrary power over those around them without

being thereby more or less demoralised. When the noble entered the service he had not the same immunity from restraint—on the contrary, his position resembled rather that of the serf—but he breathed an atmosphere of peculation and jobbery, little conducive to moral purity and uprightness. If an official had refused to associate with those who were tainted with the prevailing vices, he would have found himself completely isolated, and would have been ridiculed as a modern Don Quixote. Add to this that all classes of the Russian people have a certain kindly, apathetic good-nature which makes them very charitable towards their neighbours, and that they do not always distinguish between forgiving private injury and excusing public delinquencies. If we bear all this in mind, we may readily understand that in the time of serfage and maladministration a man could be guilty of very reprehensible practices without incurring social excommunication.

During the period of moral awakening after the Crimean War, society suddenly changed its tune, revelled in virtuous indignation against the prevailing abuses, and placed on the pillory the most prominent delinquents; but the intensity of the moral feeling soon declined, and something of the old apathy returned. This might have been predicted by anyone well acquainted with the character and past history of the Russian people. Russia advances on the road of progress not in that smooth, gradual, prosaic way to which we are accustomed, but by a series of unconnected, frantic efforts, each of which is naturally followed by a period of temporary exhaustion.

CHAPTER XXII

PROPRIETORS OF THE MODERN SCHOOL

HITHERTO I have presented to the reader old-fashioned types which were common enough when I first resided in Russia, but which are rapidly disappearing. Let me now present a few of the modern school.

In the same district as Ivan Ivan'itch and the General lives Victor Alexandr'itch L——. As we approach his house we can at once perceive that he differs from the majority of his neighbours. The gate is painted and moves easily on its hinges, the fence is in good repair, the short avenue leading up to the front door is well kept, and in the garden we can perceive at a glance that more attention is paid to flowers than to vegetables. The house is of wood, and not large, but it has some architectural pretensions in the form of a great, pseudo-Doric wooden portico that covers three-fourths of the façade. In the interior we remark everywhere the influence of Western civilisation. Victor Alexandr'itch is by no means richer than Ivan Ivan'itch, but his rooms are much more luxuriously furnished. The furniture is of a lighter model, more comfortable, and in a much better state of preservation. Instead of the bare, scantily furnished sitting-room, with the old-fashioned barrel-organ which played only six airs, we find an elegant drawing-room, with a piano by one of the most approved makers, and numerous articles of foreign manufacture, including a small buhl table and two bits of genuine old Wedgwood. The servants are clean, and dressed in European costume. The master, too, is very different in appearance. He pays great attention to his toilette, wearing a dressing-gown only in the early morning, and a fashionable lounging-coat during the rest of the day. The Turkish pipes which his grandfather loved he holds in abhorrence, and habitually smokes cigarettes. With his wife and daughters he always

speaks French, and calls them by French or English names.

But the part of the house which most strikingly illustrates the difference between old and new is "le cabinet de monsieur." In the cabinet of Ivan Ivan'itch the furniture consists of a broad sofa which serves as a bed, a few deal chairs, and a clumsy deal table, on which are generally to be found a bundle of greasy papers, an old chipped ink-bottle, a pen, and a calendar. The cabinet of Victor Alexandr'itch has an entirely different appearance. It is small, but at once comfortable and elegant. The principal objects which it contains are a library table, with inkstand, presse-papier, paper-knives, and other articles in keeping, and in the opposite corner a large bookcase. The collection of books is remarkable, not from the number of volumes or the presence of rare editions, but from the variety of the subjects. History, art, fiction, the drama, political economy, and agriculture are represented in about equal proportions. Some of the works are in Russian, others in German, a large number in French, and a few in Italian. The collection illustrates the former life and present occupations of the owner.

The father of Victor Alexandr'itch was a landed proprietor, who had made a successful career in the civil service, and desired that his son should follow the same profession. For this purpose Victor was first carefully trained at home, and then sent to the University of Moscow, where he spent four years as a student of law. From the University he passed to the Ministry of the Interior in St. Petersburg, but he found the monotonous routine of official life not at all suited to his taste, and very soon sent in his resignation. The death of his father had made him proprietor of an estate, and thither he retired, hoping to find plenty of occupation more congenial than the writing of official papers.

At the University of Moscow he had attended lectures on history and philosophy, and had got through a large amount of desultory reading. The chief result of his studies was the acquisition of many ill-digested general principles, and certain vague, generous, humanitarian aspirations. With this intellectual capital he hoped to lead a useful life

in the country. When he had repaired and furnished the house he set himself to improve the estate. In the course of his promiscuous reading he had stumbled on some descriptions of English and Tuscan agriculture, and had there learned what wonders might be effected by a rational system of farming. Why should not Russia follow the example of England and Tuscany? By proper drainage, plentiful manure, good ploughs, and the cultivation of artificial grasses, the production might be multiplied tenfold; and by the introduction of agricultural machines the manual labour might be greatly diminished. All this seemed as simple as a sum in arithmetic, and Victor Alexandr'itch, *more scholarium rei familiaris ignarus*, without a moment's hesitation expended his ready money in procuring from England a threshing machine, ploughs, harrows, and other implements of the newest model.

The arrival of these was an event that was long remembered. The peasants examined them with attention, not unmixed with wonder, but said nothing. When the master explained to them the advantages of the new instruments, they still remained silent. Only one old man, gazing at the threshing machine, remarked, in an audible "aside," "A cunning people these Germans!"* On being asked for their opinion, they replied vaguely, "How should we know? It *ought* to be so." But when their master had retired, and was explaining to his wife and the French governess that the chief obstacle to progress in Russia was the apathetic indolence and conservative spirit of the peasantry, they expressed their opinions more freely. "These may be all very well for the Germans, but they won't do for us. How are our little horses to drag these big ploughs? And as for that (the threshing machine), it's of no use." Further examination and reflection confirmed this first impression, and it was unanimously decided that no good would come of the new-fangled inventions.

These apprehensions proved to be only too well founded. The ploughs were much too heavy for the peasants' small

* The Russian peasant comprehends all the inhabitants of Western Europe under the term Nyemtsi, which in the language of the educated designates only Germans. The rest of humanity is composed of Pravoslavniye (Greek Orthodox), Busurmanye (Mahometans), and Poliacki (Poles).

horses, and the threshing machine broke down at the first attempt to use it. For the purchase of lighter implements or stronger horses there was no ready money, and for the repairing of the threshing machine there was not an engineer within a radius of a hundred and fifty miles. The experiment was, in short, a complete failure, and the new purchases were put away out of sight.

For some weeks after this incident Victor Alexandr'itch felt very despondent, and spoke more than usual about the apathy and stupidity of the peasantry. His faith in infallible science was somewhat shaken, and his benevolent aspirations were for a time laid aside. But this eclipse of faith was not of long duration. Gradually he recovered his normal condition, and began to form new schemes. From the study of certain works on political economy he learned that the system of Communal property was ruinous to the fertility of the soil, and that free labour was always more productive than serfage. By the light of these principles he discovered why the peasantry in Russia were so poor, and by what means their condition could be ameliorated. The Communal land should be divided into family lots, and the serfs, instead of being forced to work for the proprietor, should pay a yearly sum as rent. The advantages of this change he perceived clearly—as clearly as he had formerly perceived the advantages of English agricultural implements—and he determined to make the experiment on his own estate.

His first step was to call together the more intelligent and influential of his serfs, and to explain to them his project; but his efforts at explanation were eminently unsuccessful. Even with regard to ordinary current affairs he could not express himself in that simple, homely language with which alone the peasants are familiar, and when he spoke on abstract subjects he naturally became quite unintelligible to his uneducated audience. The serfs listened attentively, but understood nothing. He might as well have spoken to them, as he often did in another kind of society, about the comparative excellence of Italian and German music. At a second attempt he had rather more success. The peasants came to understand that what he wished was to break up the *Mir*, or Rural Commune, and

to put them all "on *obrok*"—that is to say, make them pay a yearly sum instead of giving them a certain amount of agricultural labour. Much to his astonishment, his scheme did not meet with any sympathy. As to being put "on *obrok*," the serfs did not much object, though they preferred to remain as they were; but his proposal to break up the *Mir* astonished and bewildered them. They regarded it as a sea-captain might regard the proposal of a scientific wiseacre to knock a hole in the ship's bottom in order to make her sail faster. Though they did not say much, he was intelligent enough to see that they would offer a strenuous passive resistance, and as he did not wish to act tyrannically, he let the matter drop. Thus a second benevolent scheme was shipwrecked. Many other schemes had a similar fate, and Victor Alexandr'itch began to perceive that it was very difficult to do good in this world, especially when the persons to be benefited were Russian peasants.

In reality the fault lay less with the serfs than with their master. Victor Alexandr'itch was by no means a stupid man. On the contrary, he had more than average talents. Few men were more capable of grasping a new idea and forming a scheme for its realisation, and few men could play more dexterously with abstract principles. What he wanted was the power of dealing with concrete facts. The principles which he had acquired from University lectures and desultory reading were far too vague and abstract for practical use. He had studied abstract science without gaining any technical knowledge of details, and consequently when he stood face to face with real life he was like a student who, having studied mechanics in text-books, is suddenly placed in a workshop and ordered to construct a machine. Only there was one difference: Victor Alexandr'itch was not ordered to do anything. Voluntarily, without any apparent necessity, he set himself to work with tools which he could not handle. It was this that chiefly puzzled the peasants. Why should he trouble himself with these new schemes, when he might live comfortably as he was? In some of his projects they could detect a desire to increase the revenue, but in others they could discover no such motive. In these latter they attributed his conduct

to pure caprice, and put it into the same category as those mad pranks in which proprietors of jovial humour sometimes indulged.

In the last years of serfage there were a good many landed proprietors like Victor Alexandr'itch—men who wished to do something beneficent, and did not know how to do it. When serfage was being abolished the majority of these men took an active part in the great work and rendered valuable service to their country. Victor Alexandr'itch acted otherwise. At first he sympathised warmly with the proposed emancipation and wrote several articles on the advantages of free labour, but when the Government took the matter into its own hands he declared that the officials had deceived and slighted the Noblesse, and he went over to the Opposition. Before the Imperial Edict was signed he went abroad, and travelled for three years in Germany, France, and Italy. Shortly after his return he married a pretty, accomplished young lady, the daughter of an eminent official in St. Petersburg, and since that time he has lived in his country house.

Though a man of education and culture, Victor Alexandr'itch spends his time in almost as indolent a way as the men of the old school. He rises somewhat later, and instead of sitting by the open window and gazing into the courtyard, he turns over the pages of a book or periodical. Instead of dining at midday and supping at nine o'clock, he takes *déjeuner* at twelve and dines at five. He spends less time in sitting in the veranda and pacing up and down with his hands behind his back, for he can vary the operation of time-killing by occasionally writing a letter, or by standing behind his wife at the piano while she plays selections from Mozart and Beethoven. But these peculiarities are merely variations in detail. If there is any essential difference between the lives of Victor Alexandr'itch and of Ivan Ivan'itch, it is in the fact that the former never goes out into the fields to see how the work is done, and never troubles himself with the state of the weather, the condition of the crops, and cognate subjects. He leaves the management of his estate entirely to his steward, and refers to that personage all peasants who come to him with complaints

or petitions. Though he takes a deep interest in the peasant as an impersonal, abstract entity, and loves to contemplate concrete examples of the genus in the works of certain popular authors, he does not like to have any direct relations with peasants in the flesh. If he has to speak with them he always feels awkward, and in winter he suffers from the odour of their sheepskins. Ivan Ivan'itch is ever ready to talk with the peasants, and give them sound, practical advice or severe admonitions; and in the old times he was apt, in moments of irritation, to supplement his admonitions by a free use of his fists. Victor Alexandr'itch, on the contrary, never could give any advice except vague commonplace, and as to using his fists, he would have shrunk from that, not only from respect to humanitarian principles, but also from motives which belong to the region of æsthetic sensitiveness.

This difference between the two men has an important influence on their pecuniary affairs. The stewards of both steal from their masters; but that of Ivan Ivan'itch steals with difficulty, and to a very limited extent, whereas that of Victor Alexandr'itch steals regularly and methodically, and counts his gains, not by kopeks, but by roubles. Though the two estates are of about the same size and value, they give a very different revenue. The rough, practical man has a much larger income than his elegant, well-educated neighbour, and at the same time spends very much less. The consequences of this, if not at present visible, must some day become painfully apparent. Ivan Ivan'itch will doubtless leave to his children an unencumbered estate and a certain amount of capital. The children of Victor Alexandr'itch have a different prospect. He has already begun to mortgage his property and to cut down the timber, and he always finds a deficit at the end of the year. What will become of his wife and children when the estate comes to be sold for payment of the mortgage, it is difficult to predict. He thinks very little of that eventuality, and when his thoughts happen to wander in that direction, he consoles himself with the thought that before the crash comes he will have inherited a fortune from a rich uncle who has no children.

The proprietors of the old school lead the same uniform, monotonous life year after year, with very little variation. Victor Alexandr'itch, on the contrary, feels the need of a periodical return to "civilised society," and accordingly spends a few weeks every winter in St. Petersburg. During the summer months he has the society of his brother—*un homme tout à fait civilisé*—who possesses an estate a few miles off.

This brother, Vladimir Alexandr'itch, was educated in the School of Law in St. Petersburg, and has since risen rapidly in the service. He holds now a prominent position in one of the Ministries, and has the honorary Court title of "Chambellan de sa Majesté." He is a marked man in the higher circles of the Administration, and will, it is thought, some day become Minister. Though an adherent of enlightened views, and a professed "Liberal," he contrives to keep on very good terms with those who imagine themselves to be "Conservatives." In this he is assisted by his soft, oily manner. If you express an opinion to him he will always begin by telling you that you are quite right; and if he ends by showing you that you are quite wrong, he will at least make you feel that your error is not only excusable, but in some way highly creditable to your intellectual acuteness or goodness of heart. In spite of his Liberalism he is a staunch Monarchist, and considers that the time has not yet come for the Emperor to grant a Constitution. He recognises that the present order of things has its defects, but thinks that, on the whole, it acts very well, and would act much better if certain high officials were removed, and more energetic men put in their places. Like all genuine St. Petersburg *tchinóvniks* (officials), he has great faith in the miraculous power of Imperial ukazes and Ministerial circulars, and believes that national progress consists in multiplying these documents, and centralising the Administration, so as to give them more effect. As a supplementary means of progress he highly approves of æsthetic culture, and he can speak with some eloquence on the humanising influence of the fine arts. For his own part he is well acquainted with French and English classics, and particularly admires Macaulay, whom he declares to have

been not only a great writer, but also a great statesman. Among writers of fiction he gives the palm to George Eliot, and speaks of the novelists of his own country, and, indeed, of Russian literature as a whole, in the most disparaging terms.

A very different estimate of Russian literature is held by Alexander Ivan'itch N——, formerly arbiter in peasant affairs, and afterwards justice of the peace. Discussions on this subject often take place between the two. The admirer of Macaulay declares that Russia has, properly speaking, no literature whatever, and that the works which bear the names of Russian authors are nothing but a feeble echo of the literature of Western Europe. "Imitators," he is wont to say, "skilful imitators, we have produced in abundance. But where is there a man of original genius? What is our famous poet Zhukóvski? A translator. What is Pushkin? A clever pupil of the romantic school. What is Lermontov? A feeble imitator of Byron. What is Gógol?"

At this point Alexander Ivan'itch invariably intervenes. He is ready to sacrifice all the pseudo-classic and romantic poetry, and, in fact, the whole of Russian literature anterior to about the year 1840, but he will not allow anything disrespectful to be said of Gógol, who about that time founded the Russian realistic school. "Gógol," he holds, "was a great and original genius. Gógol not only created a new kind of literature; he at the same time transformed the reading public, and inaugurated a new era in the intellectual development of the nation. By his humorous, satirical sketches he swept away the metaphysical dreaming and foolish romantic affectation then in fashion, and taught men to see their country as it was, in all its hideous ugliness. With his help the young generation perceived the rottenness of the Administration, and the meanness, stupidity, dishonesty, and worthlessness of the landed proprietors, whom he made the special butt of his ridicule. The recognition of defects produced a desire for reform. From laughing at the proprietors there was but one step to despising them, and when we learned to despise the proprietors we naturally came to sympathise with the serfs. Thus the Emancipation was prepared by the literature; and when the great question

had to be solved, it was the literature that discovered a satisfactory solution."

This is a subject on which Alexander Ivan'itch feels very strongly, and on which he always speaks with warmth. He knows a good deal regarding the intellectual movement which began about 1840, and culminated in the great reforms of the 'sixties. As a University student he troubled himself very little with serious academic work, but he read with intense interest all the leading periodicals, and adopted the doctrine of Belinski that art should not be cultivated for its own sake, but should be made subservient to social progress. This belief was confirmed by a perusal of some of George Sand's earlier works, which were for him a kind of revelation. Social questions engrossed his thoughts, and all other subjects seemed puny by comparison. When the Emancipation question was raised he saw an opportunity of applying some of his theories, and threw himself enthusiastically into the new movement as an ardent abolitionist. When the law was passed he helped to put it into execution by serving for three years as an Arbiter of the Peace. Now he is an old man, but he has preserved some of his youthful enthusiasm, attends regularly the annual assemblies of the Zemstvo, and takes a lively interest in all public affairs.

As an ardent partisan of local self-government he habitually scoffs at the centralised bureaucracy, which he proclaims to be the great bane of his unhappy country. "These tchinóvniks," he is wont to say in moments of excitement, "who live in St. Petersburg and govern the Empire, know about as much of Russia as they do of China. They live in a world of official documents, and are hopelessly ignorant of the real wants and interests of the people. So long as all the required formalities are duly observed they are perfectly satisfied. The people may be allowed to die of starvation if only the fact do not appear in the official reports. Powerless to do any good themselves, they are powerful enough to prevent others from working for the public good, and are extremely jealous of all private initiative. How have they acted, for instance, towards the Zemstvo? The Zemstvo is really a good institution, and might have done great things if it had been left alone, but

as soon as it began to show a little independent energy the officials at once clipped its wings and then strangled it. Towards the Press they have acted in the same way. They are afraid of the Press, because they fear above all things a healthy public opinion, which the Press alone can create. Everything that disturbs the habitual routine alarms them. Russia cannot make any real progress so long as she is ruled by these cursed tchinóvniks."

Scarcely less pernicious than the *tchinóvnik,* in the eyes of our would-be reformer, is the *baritch*—that is to say, the pampered, capricious, spoiled child of mature years, whose life is spent in elegant indolence and fine talking. Our friend Victor Alexandr'itch is commonly selected as a representative of this type. "Look at him!" exclaims Alexander Ivan'itch. "What a useless, contemptible member of society! In spite of his generous aspirations he never succeeds in doing anything useful to himself or to others. When the peasant question was raised and there was work to be done, he went abroad and talked Liberalism in Paris and Baden-Baden. Though he reads, or at least professes to read, books on agriculture, and is always ready to discourse on the best means of preventing the exhaustion of the soil, he knows less of farming than a peasant boy of twelve, and when he goes into the fields he can hardly distinguish rye from oats. Instead of babbling about German and Italian music, he would do well to learn a little about practical farming, and look after his estate."

Whilst Alexander Ivan'itch thus censures his neighbours, he is himself not without detractors. Some staid old proprietors regard him as a dangerous man, and quote expressions of his which seem to indicate that his notions of property are somewhat loose. Many consider that his Liberalism is of a very violent kind, and that he has strong republican sympathies. In his decisions as Justice he often leaned, it is said, to the side of the peasants against the proprietors. Then he was always trying to induce the peasants of the neighbouring villages to found schools, and he had wonderful ideas about the best method of teaching children. These and similar facts make many people believe that he has very advanced ideas, and one old gentleman

habitually calls him—half in joke and half in earnest—"our friend the Communist."

In reality Alexander Ivan'itch has nothing of the communist about him. Though he loudly denounces the *tchinóvnik* spirit—or, as we should say, red-tape in all its forms—and is an ardent partisan of local self-government, he is one of the last men in the world to take part in any revolutionary movement. He would like to see the Central Government enlightened and controlled by public opinion and by a national representation, but he believes that this can only be effected by voluntary concessions on the part of the Autocratic Power. He has, perhaps, a sentimental love of the peasantry, and is always ready to advocate its interests; but he has come too much in contact with individual peasants to accept those idealised descriptions in which some popular writers indulge, and it may safely be asserted that the accusation of his voluntarily favouring peasants at the expense of proprietors is wholly unfounded. Alexander Ivan'itch is, in fact, a quiet, sensible man, who is capable of generous enthusiasm, and is not at all satisfied with the existing state of things; but he is not a dreamer and a *révolutionnaire*, as some of his neighbours assert.

I am afraid I cannot say as much for his younger brother Nikolaï, who lives with him. Nikolaï Ivan'itch is a tall, slender man, about sixty years of age, with emaciated face, bilious complexion and long black hair—evidently a person of excitable, nervous temperament. When he speaks he articulates rapidly, and uses more gesticulation than is common among his countrymen. His favourite subject of conversation, or rather of discourse, for he more frequently preaches than talks, is the lamentable state of the country and the worthlessness of the Government. Against the Government he has a great many causes for complaint, and one or two of a personal kind. In 1861 he was a student in the University of St. Petersburg. At that time there was a great deal of public excitement all over Russia, and especially in the capital. The serfs had just been emancipated, and other important reforms had been undertaken. There was a general conviction among the young generation—and it must be added among many older men—that

the autocratic, paternal system of government was at an end, and that Russia was about to be reorganised according to the most advanced principles of political and social science. The students, sharing this conviction, wished to be freed from all academical authority, and to organise a kind of academic self-government. They desired especially the right of holding public meetings for the discussion of their common affairs. The authorities would not allow this, and issued a list of rules prohibiting meetings and raising the class-fees, so as practically to exclude many of the poorer students. This was felt to be a wanton insult to the spirit of the new era. In spite of the prohibition, indignation meetings were held, and fiery speeches made by male and female orators, first in the class-rooms, and afterwards in the courtyard of the University. On one occasion a long procession marched through the principal streets to the house of the Curator. Never had such a spectacle been seen before in St. Petersburg. Timid people feared that it was the commencement of a revolution, and dreamed about barricades. At last the authorities took energetic measures; about 300 students were arrested, and of these, thirty-two were expelled from the University.

Among those who were expelled was Nikolaï Ivan'itch. All his hopes of becoming a professor as he had intended were thereby shipwrecked, and he had to look out for some other profession. A literary career now seemed the most promising, and certainly the most congenial to his tastes. It would enable him to gratify his ambition of being a public man, and give him opportunities of attacking and annoying his persecutors. He had already written occasionally for one of the leading periodicals, and now he became a regular contributor. His stock of positive knowledge was not very large, but he had the power of writing fluently and of making his readers believe that he had an unlimited store of political wisdom which the Press-censure prevented him from publishing. Besides this, he had the talent of saying sharp, satirical things about those in authority, in such a way that even a Press Censor could not easily raise objections. Articles written in this style were sure at that time to be popular, and his had a very great success. He became

a known man in literary circles, and for a time all went well. But gradually he became less cautious, whilst the authorities became more vigilant. Some copies of a violent seditious proclamation fell into the hands of the police, and it was generally believed that the document proceeded from the coterie to which he belonged. From that moment he was carefully watched, till one night he was unexpectedly roused from his sleep by a gendarme and conveyed to the fortress.

When a man is arrested in this way for a real or supposed political offence, there are two modes of dealing with him: he may be tried before a regular tribunal, or he may be dealt with "by administrative procedure" (*administrativnym poryadkom*). In the former case he will, if convicted, be condemned to imprisonment for a certain term; or, if the offence be of a graver nature, he may be transported to Siberia either for a fixed period or for life. By the administrative procedure he is simply removed without a trial to some distant town, and compelled to live there under police supervision during his Majesty's pleasure. Nikolaï Ivan'itch was treated "administratively," because the authorities, though convinced that he was a dangerous character, could not find sufficient evidence to procure his conviction before a court of justice. For five years he lived under police supervision in a small town near the White Sea, and then one day he was informed, without any explanation, that he might go and live anywhere he pleased except in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Since that time he has lived with his brother, and spends his time in brooding over his grievances and bewailing his shattered illusions. He has lost none of that fluency which gained him an ephemeral literary reputation, and can speak by the hour on political and social questions to anyone who will listen to him. It is extremely difficult, however, to follow his discourses, and utterly impossible to retain them in the memory. They belong to what may be called political metaphysics—for though he professes to hold metaphysics in abhorrence, he is himself a thorough metaphysician in his modes of thought. He lives, indeed, in a world of abstract conceptions, in which he can scarcely perceive concrete facts, and his arguments are always a kind of

clever juggling with such equivocal, conventional terms as aristocracy, *bourgeoisie,* monarchy, and the like. At concrete facts he arrives, not directly by observation, but by deductions from general principles, so that his facts can never by any possibility contradict his theories. Then he has certain axioms which he tacitly assumes, and on which all his arguments are based; as, for instance, that everything to which the term "Liberal" can be applied must necessarily be good at all times and under all conditions.

Among a mass of vague conceptions which it is impossible to reduce to any clearly defined form he has a few ideas which are perhaps not strictly true, but which are at least intelligible. Among these is his conviction that Russia has let slip a magnificent opportunity of distancing all Europe on the road of progress. She might, he thinks, at the time of the Emancipation, have boldly accepted all the most advanced principles of political and social science, and have completely reorganised the political and social structure in accordance with them. Other nations could not take such a step, because they are old and decrepit, filled with stubborn, hereditary prejudices, and cursed with an aristocracy and a *bourgeoisie;* but Russia is young, knows nothing of social castes, and has no deep-rooted prejudices to contend with. The population is like potter's clay, which can be made to assume any form that science may recommend. Alexander II. began a magnificent sociological experiment, but he stopped half-way.

Some day, he believes, the experiment will be completed, but not by the Autocratic Power. In his opinion, autocracy is "played out," and must give way to Parliamentary institutions. For him a Constitution is a kind of omnipotent fetish. You may try to explain to him that a Parliamentary regime, whatever its advantages may be, necessarily produces political parties and political conflicts, and is not nearly so suitable for grand sociological experiments as a good paternal despotism. You may try to convince him that, though it may be difficult to convert an autocrat, it is infinitely more difficult to convert a House of Commons. But all your efforts will be in vain. He will assure you that a Russian Parliament would be something quite different from what

Parliaments commonly are. It would contain no parties, for Russia has no social castes, and would be guided entirely by scientific considerations—as free from prejudice and personal influences as a philosopher speculating on the nature of the Infinite! In short, he evidently imagines that a national Parliament would be composed of himself and his friends, and that the nation would calmly submit to their ukazes as it has hitherto submitted to the ukazes of the Tsars.

Pending the advent of this political millennium, when unimpassioned science is to reign supreme, Nikolaï Ivan'itch allows himself the luxury of indulging in some very decided political animosities, and he hates with the fervour of a fanatic. Firstly and chiefly, he hates what he calls the *bourgeoisie*—he is obliged to use the French word, because his native language does not contain an equivalent term—and especially capitalists of all sorts and dimensions. Next, he hates aristocracy, especially a form of aristocracy called Feudalism. To these abstract terms he does not attach a very precise meaning, but he hates the entities which they are supposed to represent quite as heartily as if they were personal enemies. Among the things which he hates in his own country, the Autocratic Power holds the first place. Next, as an emanation from the Autocratic Power, come the *tchinóvniks*, and especially the gendarmes. Then come the landed proprietors. Though he is himself a landed proprietor, he regards the class as cumberers of the ground, and thinks that all their land should be confiscated and distributed among the peasantry.

All proprietors have the misfortune to come under his sweeping denunciations, because they are inconsistent with his ideal of a peasant Empire, but he recognises amongst them degrees of depravity. Some are simply obstructive, whilst others are actively prejudicial to the public welfare. Among these latter a special object of aversion is Prince S——, because he not only possesses very large estates, but at the same time has aristocratic pretensions, and calls himself a Conservative.

Prince S—— is by far the most important man in the district. His family is one of the oldest in the country;

but he does not owe his influence to his pedigree, for pedigree pure and simple does not count for much in Russia. He is influential and respected because he is a great landholder with a high official position, and belongs by birth to that group of families which forms the permanent nucleus of the ever-changing Court society. His father and grandfather were important personages in the administration and at Court, and his sons and grandsons will probably in this respect follow in the footsteps of their ancestors. Though in the eye of the law all nobles are equal, and, theoretically speaking, promotion is gained exclusively by personal merit, yet, in reality, those who have friends at Court rise more easily and more rapidly.

The Prince has had a prosperous but not very eventful life. He was educated, first at home, under an English tutor, and afterwards in the *Corps des Pages*. On leaving this institution he entered a regiment of the Guards, and rose steadily to high military rank. His activity, however, has been chiefly in the civil administration, and he now has a seat on the Council of State. Though he has always taken a certain interest in public affairs, he did not play an important part in any of the great reforms. When the peasant question was raised he sympathised with the idea of emancipation, but did not at all sympathise with the idea of giving land to the emancipated serfs and preserving the Communal institutions. What he desired was that the proprietors should liberate their serfs without any pecuniary indemnity, and should receive in return a certain share of political power. His scheme was not adopted, but he has not relinquished the hope that the great landed proprietors may somehow obtain a social and political position similar to that of the great landowners in England.

Official duties and social relations compel the Prince to live for a large part of the year in the capital. He spends only a few weeks yearly on his estate. The house is large, and fitted up in the English style, with a view to combining elegance and comfort. It contains several spacious apartments, a library, and a billiard-room. There is an extensive park, an immense garden with hothouses, numerous horses and carriages, and a legion of servants. In the drawing-

room is a plentiful supply of English and French books, newspapers, and periodicals, including the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, which gives the news of the day. The family have, in short, all the conveniences and comforts which money and refinement can procure, but it cannot be said that they greatly enjoy the time spent in the country. The Princess has no decided objection to it. She is devoted to a little grandchild, is fond of reading and correspondence, amuses herself with a school and hospital which she has founded for the peasantry, and occasionally drives over to see her friend, the Countess N——, who lives about fifteen miles off.

The Prince, however, finds country life excessively dull. He does not care for riding or shooting, and he finds nothing else to do. He knows nothing about the management of his estate, and holds consultations with the steward merely *pro forma*—this estate, and the others which he possesses in different provinces, being ruled by a head-steward in St. Petersburg, in whom he has the most complete confidence. In the vicinity there is no one with whom he cares to associate. Naturally he is not a sociable man, and he has acquired a stiff, formal, reserved manner that is rarely met with in Russia. This manner repels the neighbouring proprietors—a fact that he does not at all regret, for they do not belong to his *monde*, and they have in their manners and habits a free-and-easy rusticity which is positively disagreeable to him. His relations with them are therefore confined to formal calls. The greater part of the day he spends in listless loitering, frequently yawning, regretting the routine of St. Petersburg life—the pleasant chats with his colleagues, the opera, the ballet, the French theatre, and the quiet rubber at the Club Anglais. His spirits rise as the day of his departure approaches, and when he drives off to the station he looks bright and cheerful. If he consulted merely his own tastes he would never visit his estates at all, and would spend his summer holidays in Germany, France, or Switzerland, as he did in his bachelor days; but as a large landowner he considers it right to sacrifice his personal inclinations to the duties of his position.

There is, by the way, another princely magnate in the

district, and I ought perhaps to introduce him to my readers, because he represents worthily a new type. Like Prince S——, of whom I have just spoken, he is a great landowner and a descendant of the half-mythical Rurik; but he has no official rank, and does not possess a single *grand cordon*. In that respect he has followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who had something of the *frondeur* spirit, and preferred the position of a *grand seigneur* and a country gentleman to that of a *tchinóvnik* and a courtier. In the Liberal camp he is regarded as a Conservative, but he has little in common with the Reactionaries (*Krepostniki*), who declare that the reforms of the last half-century were a mistake, that everything is going to the bad, that the emancipated serfs are all sluggards, drunkards, and thieves, that the local self-government is an ingenious machine for wasting money, and that the reformed law-courts have conferred benefits only on the lawyers. On the contrary, he recognises the necessity and beneficent results of the reforms, and with regard to the future he has none of the despairing pessimism of the incorrigible old Tory.

But in order that real progress should be made, he thinks that certain current and fashionable errors must be avoided, and among these errors he places, in the first rank, the views and principles of the advanced Liberals, who have a blind admiration for Western Europe, and for what they are pleased to call the results of science. Like the Liberals of the West, these gentlemen assume that the best form of government is constitutionalism, monarchical or republican, on a broad democratic basis, and towards the realisation of this ideal all their efforts are directed. Not so our Conservative friend. While admitting that democratic Parliamentary institutions may be the best form of government for the more advanced nations of the West, he maintains that the only firm foundation for the Russian Empire, and the only solid guarantee of its future prosperity, is the Autocratic Power, which is the sole genuine representative of the national spirit. Looking at the past from this point of view, he perceives that the Tsars have ever identified themselves with the nation, and have always understood, in part instinctively and in part by reflection, what the nation really

required. Whenever the infiltration of Western ideas threatened to swamp the national individuality, the Autocratic Power intervened and averted the danger by timely precautions. Something of the kind may be observed, he believes, at present, when the Liberals are clamouring for extreme democratic institutions; but the Autocratic Power is on the alert, and will as usual do what is necessary.

With the efforts of the Zemstvo in this direction, and with the activity of the Zemstvo generally, the Prince has little sympathy, partly because the institution is in the hands of the Liberals and is guided by their unpractical ideas, and partly because it enables some ambitious outsiders to acquire the influence in local affairs which ought to be exercised by the old-established noble families of the district. What he would like to see is an enlightened, influential gentry working in conjunction with the Autocratic Power for the good of the country; but he recognises that his ideal has little prospect of being realised.

The Prince belongs to the highest rank of the Russian Noblesse. If we wish to get an idea of the lowest rank, we can find in the neighbourhood a number of poor, uneducated nobles, who live in small, squalid houses, and are not easily to be distinguished from peasants. In other parts of the country we might find men in this condition bearing the title of prince! This is the natural result of the Russian law of inheritance, which does not recognise the principle of primogeniture with regard to titles and estates.

CHAPTER XXIII

SOCIAL CLASSES

In the preceding pages I have repeatedly used the expression "social classes," and probably more than once the reader has felt inclined to ask, What are social classes in the Russian sense of the term? It may be well, therefore, before going farther, to answer this question.

If the question were put to a Russian it is not at all unlikely that he would reply somewhat in this fashion: "In Russia there are no social classes, and there never have been any. That fact constitutes one of the most striking peculiarities of her historical development, and one of the surest foundations of her future greatness. We know nothing, and have never known anything, of those class distinctions and class enmities which in Western Europe have often rudely shaken society in past times, and imperil its existence in the future."

This statement will not be readily accepted by the traveller who visits Russia with no preconceived ideas and forms his opinions from his own observations. To him it seems that class distinctions form one of the most prominent characteristics of Russian society. In a few days he learns to distinguish the various classes by their outward appearance. He notices perhaps nothing peculiar in the nobles, because they dress in the ordinary European fashion, but he easily recognises the burly, bearded merchant in black cloth cap and long, shiny, double-breasted coat; the priest with his uncut hair and flowing robes; the peasant with his full, fair beard and unsavoury, greasy sheepskin. Meeting everywhere those well-marked types, he naturally assumes that Russian society is composed of exclusive castes; and this first impression will be fully confirmed by a glance at the Code. On examining that monumental work, he finds that an entire volume—and by no means the smallest—is

devoted to the rights and obligations of the various classes. From this he concludes that the classes have a legal as well as an actual existence. To make assurance doubly sure he turns to the latest statistics, and there he finds the following table:—

Nobles and officials	1·5	per cent.
Clergy	·5	,,
Merchants	·5	,,
Burghers	10·7	,,
Peasants	77·1	,,
Cossacks	2·3	,,
Miscellaneous	7·4	,,
	100·0	,,

Armed with these materials, the traveller goes to his Russian friends who have assured him that their country knows nothing of class distinctions. He is confident of being able to convince them that they have been labouring under a strange delusion, but he will be disappointed. They will tell him that these laws and statistics prove nothing, and that the categories therein mentioned are mere administrative fictions.

This apparent contradiction is to be explained by the equivocal meaning of the Russian terms *Sosloviya* and *Sostoyaniya,* which are commonly translated "social classes." If by these terms are meant "castes" in the Oriental sense, then it may be confidently asserted that such do not exist in Russia. Between the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants there are no distinctions of race and no impassable barriers. The peasant often becomes a merchant, and there are many cases on record of peasants and sons of parish priests becoming nobles. Until very recently the parish clergy composed, as we have seen, a peculiar and exclusive class, with many of the characteristics of a caste; but this has been changed, and it may now be said that in Russia there are no castes in the Oriental sense.

If the word *Sosloviya* be taken to mean an organised political unit with an esprit de corps and a clearly conceived political aim, it may likewise be admitted that there are none in Russia. Among the subjects of the Tsar political

life is still in its infancy, and political parties are only beginning to be formed.

On the other hand, to say that social classes have never existed in Russia, and that the categories which appear in the legislation and in the official statistics are mere administrative fictions, is a piece of gross exaggeration.

From the very beginning of Russian history we can detect unmistakably the existence of social classes, such as the princes, the *Boyárs*, or armed followers of the princes, the peasantry, the slaves, and various others; and one of the oldest documents which we possess—the "Russian Right" (*Rússkaya Pravda*) of the Grand Prince Yaroslav (1019-1054)—contains irrefragable proof, in the penalties attached to various crimes, that these classes were formally recognised by the legislation. Since that time they have frequently changed their character, but they have never at any period ceased to exist.

In ancient times, when there was very little administrative regulation, the classes had perhaps no clearly defined boundaries, and the peculiarities which distinguished them from each other were actual rather than legal—lying in the mode of life and social position rather than in peculiar obligations and privileges. But as the Autocratic Power developed and strove to transform the nation into a State with a highly centralised administration, the legal element in the social distinctions became more and more prominent. For financial and other purposes the people had to be divided into various categories. The actual distinctions were of course taken as the basis of the legal classification, but the classifying had more than a merely formal significance. The necessity of clearly defining the different groups entailed the necessity of elevating and strengthening the barriers which already existed between them, and the difficulty of passing from one group to another was thereby increased.

In this work of classification Peter the Great especially distinguished himself. With his insatiable passion for regulation, he raised formidable barriers between the different categories, and defined the obligations of each with microscopic minuteness. After his death the work was carried

on in the same spirit, and the tendency reached its climax in the reign of Nicholas I., when the number of students to be received in the universities was determined by Imperial ukaz!

In the reign of Catherine a new element was introduced into the official conception of social classes. Down to her time the Government had thought merely of class obligations; under the influence of Western ideas she introduced the conception of class rights. She wished, as we have seen, to have in her Empire a noblesse and a *tiers-état* like those which existed in France, and for this purpose she granted, first to the *Dvoryánstvo* and afterwards to the towns, an Imperial Charter, or Bill of Rights. Succeeding Sovereigns have acted in the same spirit, and the Code now confers on each class numerous privileges as well as numerous obligations.

Thus, we see, the oft-repeated assertion that the Russian social classes are simply artificial categories created by the legislature is to a certain extent true, but is by no means accurate. The social groups, such as peasants, landed proprietors, and the like, came into existence in Russia, as in other countries, by the simple force of circumstances. The legislature merely recognised and developed the social distinctions which already existed. The legal status, obligations, and rights of each group were minutely defined and regulated, and legal barriers were added to the actual barriers which separated the groups from each other.

What is peculiar in the historical development of Russia is this: until lately she remained an almost exclusively agricultural Empire with abundance of unoccupied land. Her history presents, therefore, few of those conflicts which result from the variety of social conditions and the intensified struggle for existence. Certain social groups were, indeed, formed in the course of time, but they were never allowed to fight out their own battles. The irresistible Autocratic Power kept them always in check and fashioned them into whatever form it thought proper, defining minutely and carefully their obligations, their rights, their mutual relations, and their respective positions in the political organisation. Hence we find in the history of Russia almost no

trace of those class hatreds which appear so conspicuously in the history of Western Europe.*

The practical consequence of all this is that in Russia at the present day there is very little caste spirit or caste prejudice. Within half a dozen years after the emancipation of the serfs, proprietors and peasants, forgetting apparently their old relationship of master and serf, were working amicably together in the new local administration, and not a few similar curious facts might be cited. The confident anticipation of many Russians that their country will one day enjoy political life without political parties is, if not a contradiction in terms, at least a Utopian absurdity; but we may be sure that the Russian political parties of the future will be very different from those which exist in Germany, France, and England.

Meanwhile, let us see how the country has been governed without political parties and without political life in the West-European sense of the term. This will form the subject of the next chapter.

* This is, I believe, the true explanation of an important fact, which the Slavophils endeavoured to explain by an ill-authenticated legend (vide supra, p. 172).

CHAPTER XXIV

THE IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE OFFICIALS

My administrative studies were begun in Novgorod. One of my reasons for spending a winter in that provincial capital was that I might study the provincial administration, and as soon as I had made the acquaintance of the leading officials I explained to them the object I had in view. With the kindly *bonhomie* which distinguishes the Russian educated classes, they all volunteered to give me every assistance in their power, but some of them, on mature reflection, evidently saw reason to check their first generous impulse. Among these was the Vice-Governor, a gentleman of German origin, and therefore more inclined to be pedantic than a genuine Russian. When I called on him one evening and reminded him of his friendly offer, I found to my surprise that he had in the meantime changed his mind. Instead of answering my first simple inquiry, he stared at me fixedly, as if for the purpose of detecting some covert, malicious design, and then, putting on an air of official dignity, informed me that as I had not been authorised by the Minister to make these investigations, he could not assist me, and would certainly not allow me to examine the archives.

This was not encouraging, but it did not prevent me from applying to the Governor, and I found him a man of a very different stamp. Delighted to meet a foreigner who seemed anxious to study seriously in an unbiased frame of mind the institutions of his much-maligned native country, he willingly explained to me the mechanism of the administration which he directed and controlled, and kindly placed at my disposal the books and documents in which I could find the historical and practical information which I required. This friendly attitude of his Excellency towards me soon became generally known in the town, and from that moment

my difficulties were at an end. The minor officials no longer hesitated to initiate me into the mysteries of their respective departments, and at last even the Vice-Governor threw off his reserve and followed the example of his colleagues. The elementary information thus acquired I had afterwards abundant opportunities of completing by observation and study in other parts of the Empire, and I now propose to communicate to the reader a few of the more general results.

The gigantic administrative machine which holds together all the various parts of the vast Empire has been gradually created by successive generations, but we may say roughly that it was first designed and constructed by Peter the Great. Before his time the country was governed in a rude, primitive fashion. The Grand Princes of Moscow, in subduing their rivals and annexing the surrounding principalities, merely cleared the ground for a great homogeneous State. Wily, practical politicians, rather than statesmen of the doctrinaire type, they never dreamed of introducing uniformity and symmetry into the administration as a whole. They developed the ancient institutions so far as these were useful and consistent with the exercise of autocratic power, and made only such alterations as practical necessity demanded. And these necessary alterations were more frequently local than general. Special decisions, instructions to particular officials, and charters for particular communes or proprietors, were much more common than general legislative measures.

In short, the old Muscovite Tsars practised a hand-to-mouth policy, destroying whatever caused temporary inconvenience, and giving little heed to what did not force itself upon their attention. Hence, under their rule the administration presented not only territorial peculiarities, but also an ill-assorted combination of different systems in the same district—a conglomeration of institutions belonging to different epochs, like a fleet composed of triremes, three-deckers, and ironclads.

This irregular system, or rather want of system, seemed highly unsatisfactory to the logical mind of Peter the Great, and he conceived the grand design of sweeping it away, and putting in its place a symmetrical bureaucratic machine. It is scarcely necessary to say that this magnificent

project, so foreign to the traditional ideas and customs of the people, was not easily realised. Imagine a man, without technical knowledge, without skilled workmen, without good tools, and with no better material than soft, crumbling sandstone, endeavouring to build a palace on a marsh! The undertaking would seem to reasonable minds utterly absurd, and yet it must be admitted that Peter's project was scarcely more feasible. He had neither technical knowledge, nor the requisite materials, nor a firm foundation to build on. With his usual Titanic energy he demolished the old structure, but his attempts to construct were little more than a series of failures. In his numerous ukazes he has left us a graphic description of his efforts, and it is at once instructive and pathetic to watch the great worker toiling indefatigably at his self-imposed task. His instruments are constantly breaking in his hands. The foundations of the building are continually giving way, and the lower tiers crumbling under the superincumbent weight. Now and then a whole section is found to be unsuitable, and is ruthlessly pulled down, or falls of its own accord. And yet the builder toils on, with a perseverance and an energy of purpose that compel admiration, frankly confessing his mistakes and failures, and patiently seeking the means of remedying them, never allowing a word of despondency to escape him, and never despairing of ultimate success. And at length death comes, and the mighty builder is snatched away suddenly in the midst of his unfinished labours, bequeathing to his successors the task of carrying on the great work.

None of these successors possessed Peter's genius and energy—with the exception perhaps of Catherine II.—but they were all compelled by the force of circumstances to adopt his plans. A return to the old rough-and-ready rule of the local *Voyevods* was impossible. As the Autocratic Power became more and more imbued with Western ideas, it felt more and more the need of new means for carrying them out, and accordingly it strove to systematise and centralise the administration.

In this change we may perceive a certain analogy with the history of the French administration from the reign of Philippe le Bel to that of Louis XIV. In both countries

we see the central power bringing the local administrative organs more and more under its control, till at last it succeeds in creating a thoroughly centralised bureaucratic organisation. But under this superficial resemblance lie profound differences. The French kings had to struggle with provincial sovereignties and feudal rights, and when they had annihilated this opposition, they easily found materials with which to build up the bureaucratic structure. The Russian sovereigns, on the contrary, met with no such opposition, but they had great difficulty in finding bureaucratic material amongst their uneducated, undisciplined subjects, notwithstanding the numerous schools and colleges which were founded and maintained simply for the purpose of preparing men for the public service.

The administration was thus brought much nearer to the West-European ideal, but some people have grave doubts as to whether it became thereby better adapted to the practical wants of the people for whom it was created. On this point, a well-known Slavophil once made to me some remarks which are worthy of being recorded. "You have observed," he said, "that till very recently there was in Russia an enormous amount of official peculation, extortion, and misgovernment of every kind, that the courts of law were dens of iniquity, that the people often committed perjury, and much more of the same sort, and it must be admitted that all this has not yet entirely disappeared. But what does it prove? That the Russian people are morally inferior to the German? Not at all. It simply proves that the German system of administration, which was forced upon the Russians without their consent, was utterly unsuited to their nature. If a young growing boy be compelled to wear very tight boots, he will probably burst them, and the ugly rents will doubtless produce an unfavourable impression on the passers-by; but surely it is better that the boots should burst than that the feet should be deformed. Now, the Russian people was compelled to put on not only tight boots, but also a tight jacket, and, being young and vigorous, it burst them. Narrow-minded, pedantic Germans can neither understand nor provide for the wants of the broad Slavonic nature."

From the time of Peter the Great down to the beginning

of the present century the Russian administration was a magnificent specimen of paternal, would-be beneficent despotism, working through a complicated system of highly centralised bureaucracy. Let me briefly describe the structure as depicted in the Imperial Code of Laws, previous to the creation of the Duma.

At the top of the pyramid stands the Emperor, "the Autocratic monarch," as Peter the Great described him, "who has to give an account of his acts to no one on earth, but has power and authority to rule his States and lands as a Christian sovereign according to his own will and judgment." Immediately below his Majesty we see the Council of State, the Committee of Ministers, and the Senate, which represent respectively the legislative, the administrative, and the judicial power. At the first glance an Englishman might imagine that the Council of State is a kind of Parliament, and the Committee of Ministers a cabinet in our sense of the term, but in reality both institutions are simply incarnations of the Autocratic Power. Though the Council is entrusted with many important functions—such as discussing Bills, criticising the annual budget, declaring war and concluding peace—it has merely a consultative character, and the Emperor is not bound by its decisions. The Committee is not at all a cabinet as we understand the word. The Ministers are directly and individually responsible to the Emperor, and therefore the Committee has no common responsibility or other cohesive force. As to the Senate, it has descended from its high estate. It was originally entrusted with the supreme power during the absence or minority of the monarch, and was intended to exercise a controlling influence in all sections of the administration, but now its activity is restricted to judicial matters, and it is little more than a supreme court of appeal.

Immediately below these three institutions stand the Ministries, ten in number. They are the central points, in which converge the various kinds of territorial administration, and from which radiates the Imperial will all over the Empire.

For the purpose of territorial administration Russia Proper—that is to say, European Russia, exclusive of

Poland, the Baltic Provinces, Finland and the Caucasus—is divided into forty-nine provinces or "Governments" (*gubernii*), and each Government is subdivided into Districts (*uyezdy*). The average area of a province is about the size of Portugal, but some provinces are as small as Belgium, whilst one has nearly thirty times the area of that little kingdom. The population, however, does not correspond to the amount of territory. In the largest province, that of Archangel, there are only about 438,000 inhabitants, whilst more than a dozen of the smaller ones have each over three millions. The districts likewise vary greatly in size. Some are smaller than Oxfordshire or Buckingham, and others are bigger than the whole of the United Kingdom.

Over each province is placed a Governor, who is assisted in his duties by a Vice-Governor and a small council. According to the legislation of Catherine II., which still appears in the Code and has only been partially repealed, the Governor is termed "the steward of the province," and is entrusted with so many and such delicate duties, that in order to obtain qualified men for the post, it would be necessary to realise the great Empress's design of creating, by education, "a new race of people." Down to the time of the Crimean War the Governors understood the term "stewards" in a very literal sense, and ruled in a most arbitrary, high-handed style, often exercising an important influence on the civil and criminal tribunals. These extensive and vaguely defined powers have now been very much curtailed, partly by positive legislation, and partly by increased publicity and improved means of communication. All judicial matters have been placed theoretically beyond the Governor's control, and many of his former functions are now fulfilled by the Zemstvo—the organ of local self-government created by Alexander II. in 1866. Besides this, all ordinary current affairs are regulated by an already big and ever-growing body of instructions, in the form of Imperial orders and ministerial circulars, and as soon as anything not provided for by the instructions happens to occur, the Minister is consulted through the post-office or by telegraph.

Even within the sphere of their lawful authority the

Governors have now a certain respect for public opinion, and occasionally a very wholesome dread of casual newspaper correspondents. Thus the men who were formerly described by the satirists as "little satraps" have sunk to the level of subordinate officials. I can confidently say that many (I believe the great majority) of them are honest, upright men, who are perhaps not endowed with any unusual administrative capacities, but who perform their duties faithfully according to their lights. If any representatives of the old "satraps" still exist, they must be sought for in the outlying Asiatic provinces.

Independent of the Governor, who is the local representative of the Ministry of the Interior, are a number of resident officials, who represent the other ministries, and each of them has a bureau, with the requisite number of assistants, secretaries, and scribes.

To keep this vast and complex bureaucratic machine in motion it is necessary to have a large and well-drilled army of officials. These are drawn chiefly from the ranks of the Noblesse and the Clergy, and form a peculiar social class called *Tchinóvniks,* or men with *tchins*. As the *tchin* plays an important part in Russia, not only in the official world, but also to some extent in social life, it may be well to explain its significance.

All offices, civil and military, are, according to a scheme invented by Peter the Great, arranged in fourteen classes or ranks, and to each class or rank a particular name is attached. As promotion is supposed to be given according to personal merit, a man who enters the public service for the first time must, whatever be his social position, begin in the lower ranks, and work his way upwards. Educational certificates may exempt him from the necessity of passing through the lowest classes, and the Imperial will may disregard the restrictions laid down by law, but as a general rule a man must begin at or near the bottom of the official ladder, and he must remain on each step a certain specified time. The step on which he is for the moment standing, or, in other words, the official rank or *tchin* which he possesses, determines what offices he is competent to hold. Thus rank or *tchin* is a necessary condition for receiving an appointment,

but it does not designate any actual office, and the names of the different ranks are extremely apt to mislead a foreigner.

We must always bear this in mind when we meet with those imposing titles which Russian tourists sometimes put on their visiting cards, such as "Conseiller de Cour," "Conseiller d'État," "Conseiller privé de S.M. l'Empereur de toutes les Russies." It would be uncharitable to suppose that these titles are used with the intention of misleading, but that they do sometimes mislead there cannot be the least doubt. I shall never forget the look of intense disgust which I once saw on the face of an American who had invited to dinner a "Conseiller de Cour," on the assumption that he would have a Court dignitary as his guest, and who casually discovered that the personage in question was simply an insignificant official in one of the public offices. No doubt other people have had similar experiences. The unwary foreigner who has heard that there is in Russia a very important institution called the "Conseil d'État," naturally supposes that a "Conseiller d'État" is a member of that venerable body; and if he meets "Son Excellence le Conseiller privé," he is pretty sure to assume—especially if the word "actuel" has been affixed—that he sees before him a real living member of the Russian Privy Council. When to the title is added, "de S.M. l'Empereur de toutes les Russies," a boundless field is opened up to the non-Russian imagination. In reality these titles are not nearly so important as they seem. The *soi-disant* "Conseiller de Cour" has probably nothing to do with the Court. The Conseiller d'Etat is so far from being a member of the Conseil d'Etat that he cannot possibly become a member till he receives a higher *tchin*.* As to the Privy Councillor, it is sufficient to say that the Privy Council, which had a very odious reputation in its lifetime, died more than a century ago, and has not since been resuscitated. The explanation of these anomalies is to be found in the fact that the Russian *tchins*, like the German honorary titles—*Hofrath, Staatsrath, Geheimrath*—of which they are a literal translation, indicate

* In Russian the two words are quite different; the Council is called *Gosudarstvenny Sovêt*, and the title *Státski Sovêtnik*.

not actual office, but simply honorary official rank. Formerly the appointment to an office generally depended on the *tchin;* now there is a tendency to reverse the old order of things and make the *tchin* depend upon the office actually held.

The reader of practical mind who is in the habit of considering results rather than forms and formalities desires probably no further description of the Russian bureaucracy, but wishes to know simply how it works in practice. What has it done for Russia in the past, and what is it doing in the present?

At the present day, when faith in despotic civilisers and paternal government has been rudely shaken, and the advantages of a free, spontaneous national development are fully recognised, centralised bureaucracies have everywhere fallen into bad odour. In Russia the dislike to them is particularly strong, because it has there something more than a purely theoretical basis. The recollection of the reign of Nicholas I., with its stern military regime, and minute, pedantic formalism, makes many Russians condemn in no measured terms the administration under which they live, and most Englishmen will feel inclined to endorse this condemnation. Before passing sentence, however, we ought to know that the system has at least an historical justification, and we must not allow our love of constitutional liberty and local self-government to blind us to the distinction between theoretical and historical possibility. What seems to political philosophers abstractly the best possible government may be utterly inapplicable in certain concrete cases. We need not attempt to decide whether it is better for humanity that Russia should exist as a nation, but we may boldly assert that without a strongly centralised administration Russia would never have become one of the great European Powers. Until comparatively recent times the part of the world which is known as the Russian Empire was a conglomeration of independent or semi-independent political units, animated with centrifugal as well as centripetal forces; and even at the present day it is far from being a compact homogeneous State. It was the autocratic power, with the centralised administration as its necessary complement, that first created Russia, then

saved her from dismemberment and political annihilation, and ultimately secured for her a place among European nations by introducing Western civilisation.

Whilst thus recognising clearly that autocracy and a strongly centralised administration were necessary first for the creation and afterwards for the preservation of national independence, we must not shut our eyes to the evil consequences which resulted from this unfortunate necessity. It was in the nature of things that the Government, aiming at the realisation of designs which its subjects neither sympathised with nor clearly understood, should have become separated from the nation; and the reckless haste and violence with which it attempted to carry out its schemes aroused a spirit of positive opposition among the masses. A considerable section of the people long looked on the reforming Tsars as incarnations of the spirit of evil, and the Tsars in their turn looked upon the people as raw material for the realisation of their political designs. This peculiar relation between the nation and the Government has given the key-note to the whole system of administration. The Government has always treated the people as minors, incapable of understanding its political aims, and not fully competent to look after their own local affairs. The officials have naturally acted in the same spirit. Looking for direction and approbation merely to their superiors, they have systematically treated those over whom they were placed as a conquered or inferior race. The State has thus come to be regarded as an abstract entity, with interests entirely different from those of the human beings composing it; and in all matters in which State interests are supposed to be involved, the rights of individuals are ruthlessly sacrificed.

If we remember that the difficulties of centralised administration must be in direct proportion to the extent and territorial variety of the country to be governed, we may readily understand how slowly and imperfectly the administrative machine necessarily works in Russia. The whole of the vast region stretching from the Polar Ocean to the Caspian, and from the shores of the Baltic to the confines of the Celestial Empire, is administered from St. Petersburg. The genuine bureaucrat has a wholesome dread of formal

responsibility, and generally tries to avoid it by taking all matters out of the hands of his subordinates, and passing them on to the higher authorities. As soon, therefore, as affairs are caught up by the administrative machine they begin to ascend, and probably arrive some day at the cabinet of the Minister. Thus the Ministries are flooded with papers —many of the most trivial import—from all parts of the Empire; and the higher officials, even if they had the eyes of an Argus and the hands of a Briareus, could not possibly fulfil conscientiously the duties imposed on them. In reality the Russian administrators of the higher ranks recall neither Argus nor Briareus. They commonly show neither an extensive nor a profound knowledge of the country which they are supposed to govern, and seem always to have a fair amount of leisure time at their disposal.

Besides the unavoidable evils of excessive centralisation, Russia has had to suffer much from the jobbery, venality, and extortion of the officials. When Peter the Great one day proposed to hang every man who should steal as much as would buy a rope, his Procurator-General frankly replied that if his Majesty put his project into execution there would be no officials left. "We all steal," added the worthy official; "the only difference is that some of us steal larger amounts and more openly than others." Since these words were spoken nearly two centuries have passed, and during all that time Russia has been steadily making progress, but until the accession of Alexander II. in 1855 little change took place in the moral character of the administration. Some people still living can remember the time when they could have repeated, without much exaggeration, the confession of Peter's Procurator-General.

To appreciate aright this ugly phenomenon we must distinguish two kinds of venality. On the one hand there was the habit of exacting what are vulgarly termed "tips" for services performed, and on the other there were the various kinds of positive dishonesty. Though it might not be always easy to draw a clear line between the two categories, the distinction was fully recognised in the moral consciousness of the time, and many an official who regularly received "sinless revenues" (*bezgréshniye dokhódi*), as the

tips were sometimes called, would have been very indignant had he been stigmatised as a dishonest man. The practice was, in fact, universal, and could be, to a certain extent, justified by the smallness of the official salaries. In some departments there was a recognised tariff. The "brandy farmers," for example, who worked the State Monopoly for the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors, paid regularly a fixed sum to every official, from the Governor to the policeman, according to his rank. I knew of one case where an official, on receiving a larger sum than was customary, conscientiously handed back the change! The other and more heinous offences were by no means so common, but were still fearfully frequent. Many high officials and important dignitaries were known to receive large revenues, to which the term "sinless" could not by any means be applied, and yet they retained their position, and were received in society with respectful deference.

The Sovereigns were well aware of the abuses, and strove more or less to root them out, but the success which attended their efforts does not give us a very exalted idea of the practical omnipotence of autocracy. In a centralised bureaucratic administration, in which each official is to a certain extent responsible for the sins of his subordinates, it is always extremely difficult to bring an official culprit to justice, for he is sure to be protected by his superiors; and when the superiors are themselves habitually guilty of malpractices, the culprit is quite safe from exposure and punishment. An energetic Tsar might do much towards exposing and punishing offenders if he could venture to call in public opinion to his assistance, but in reality the Head of the State is very apt to become a party to the system of hushing up official delinquencies. He is himself the first official in the realm, and he knows that the abuse of power by a subordinate has a tendency to produce hostility towards the fountain of all official power. Frequent punishment of officials might, it is thought, diminish public respect for the Government, and undermine that social discipline which is necessary for the public tranquillity. It is therefore considered expedient to give to official delinquencies as little publicity as possible.

Besides this, strange as it may seem, a Government

which rests on the arbitrary will of a single individual is, notwithstanding occasional outbursts of severity, much less systematically severe than authority founded on free public opinion. When delinquencies occur in very high places the Tsar is almost sure to display a leniency approaching to tenderness. If it be necessary to make a sacrifice to justice, the sacrificial operation is made as painless as may be, and illustrious scapegoats are not allowed to die of starvation in the wilderness—the wilderness being generally Paris or the Riviera. This fact may seem strange to those who are in the habit of associating autocracy with Neapolitan dungeons and the mines of Siberia, but it is not difficult to explain. No individual, even though he be the Autocrat of all the Russias, can so case himself in the armour of official dignity as to be completely proof against personal influences. The severity of autocrats is reserved for political offenders, against whom they naturally harbour a feeling of personal resentment. It is so much easier for us to be lenient and charitable towards a man who sins against public morality, than towards one who sins against ourselves!

In justice to the bureaucratic reformers in Russia, it must be said that they have preferred prevention to cure. Refraining from all Draconian legislation, they have put their faith in a system of ingenious checks and a complicated formal procedure. When we examine the complicated formalities and labyrinthine procedure by which the administration is controlled, our first impression is that administrative abuses must be almost impossible. Every possible act of every official seems to have been foreseen, and every possible outlet from the narrow path of honesty seems to have been carefully walled up. As the English reader has probably no conception of formal procedure in a highly centralised bureaucracy, let me give, by way of illustration, an instance which accidentally came to my knowledge.

In the residence of a Governor-General one of the stoves is in need of repairs. An ordinary mortal may assume that a man with the rank of Governor-General may be trusted to expend a few shillings conscientiously, and that consequently his Excellency will at once order the repairs to be made and the payment to be put down among the petty

expenses. To the bureaucratic mind the case appears in a very different light. All possible contingencies must be carefully provided for. As a Governor-General may possibly be possessed with a mania for making useless alterations, the necessity for the repairs ought to be verified; and as wisdom and honesty are more likely to reside in an assembly than in an individual, it is well to entrust the verification to a council. A council of three or four members accordingly certifies that the repairs are necessary. This is pretty strong authority, but it is not enough. Councils are composed of mere human beings, liable to error and subject to be intimidated by a Governor-General. It is prudent, therefore, to demand that the decision of the council be confirmed by the Procureur, who is directly subordinated to the Minister of Justice. When this double confirmation has been obtained, an architect examines the stove, and makes an estimate. But it would be dangerous to give *carte blanche* to an architect, and therefore the estimate has to be confirmed, first by the aforesaid council and afterwards by the Procureur.

When all these formalities—which require sixteen days and ten sheets of paper—have been duly observed, his Excellency is informed that the contemplated repairs will cost two roubles and forty kopeks, or about five shillings of our money. Even here the formalities do not stop, for the Government must have the assurance that the architect who made the estimate and superintended the repairs has not been guilty of negligence. A second architect is therefore sent to examine the work, and his report, like the estimate, requires to be confirmed by the council and the Procureur. The whole correspondence lasts thirty days, and requires no less than thirty sheets of paper! Had the person who desired the repairs been not a Governor-General but an ordinary mortal, it is impossible to say how long the procedure might have lasted.*

* In fairness, I feel constrained to add that incidents of this kind occasionally occur—or at least occurred as late as 1886—in our Indian Administration. I remember an instance of a pane of glass being broken in the Viceroy's bedroom in the Viceregal Lodge at Simla, and it would have required nearly a week, if the official procedure had been scrupulously observed, to have it replaced by the Public Works Department.

It might naturally be supposed that this circuitous and complicated method, with its registers, ledgers, and minutes of proceedings, must at least prevent pilfering; but this *à priori* conclusion has been emphatically belied by experience. Every new ingenious device had merely the effect of producing a still more ingenious means of evading it. The system did not restrain those who wished to pilfer, and it had a deleterious effect on honest officials, by making them feel that the Government reposed no confidence in them. Besides this, it produced among all officials, honest and dishonest alike, the habit of systematic falsification. As it was impossible for even the most pedantic of men—and pedantry, be it remarked, is a rare quality among Russians—to fulfil conscientiously all the prescribed formalities, it became customary to observe the forms merely on paper. Officials certified facts which they never dreamed of examining, and secretaries gravely wrote the minutes of meetings that had never been held! Thus, in the case above cited, the repairs were in reality begun and ended long before the architect was officially authorised to begin the work. The comedy was nevertheless gravely played out to the end, so that anyone afterwards revising the documents would have found that everything had been done in perfect order.

Perhaps the most ingenious means for preventing administrative abuses was devised by the Emperor Nicholas I. Fully aware that he was regularly and systematically deceived by the ordinary officials, he formed a body of well-paid officers, called the "Gendarmerie," who were scattered over the country, and ordered to report directly to his Majesty whatever seemed to them worthy of attention. Bureaucratic minds considered this an admirable expedient; and the Tsar confidently expected that he would, by means of these official observers, who had no interest in concealing the truth, be able to know everything, and to correct all official abuses. In reality the institution produced few good results, and in some respects had a very pernicious influence. Though picked men and provided with good salaries, these officers were all more or less permeated with the prevailing spirit. They could not but feel that they were regarded as spies and informers—a humiliating conviction, little calculated to

develop that feeling of self-respect which is the main foundation of uprightness—and that all their efforts could do but little good. They were, in fact, in pretty much the same position as Peter's Procurator-General, and, with true Russian *bonhomie,* they disliked ruining individuals who were no worse than the majority of their fellows. Besides this, according to the received code of official morality, insubordination was a more heinous sin than dishonesty, and political offences were regarded as the blackest of all. The gendarmerie officers shut their eyes, therefore, to the prevailing abuses, which were believed to be incurable, and directed their attention to real or imaginary political delinquencies. Oppression and extortion remained unnoticed, whilst an incautious word or a foolish joke at the expense of the Government was too often magnified into an act of high treason.

This force still exists under a modified form. Towards the close of the reign of Alexander II. (1880), when Count Loris Mélikof, with the sanction and approval of his august master, was preparing to introduce a system of liberal political reforms, it was intended to abolish the gendarmerie as an organ of political espionage, and accordingly the direction of it was transferred from the so-called Third Section of his Imperial Majesty's Chancery to the Ministry of the Interior; but when the benevolent monarch was, a few months afterwards, assassinated by revolutionists, the project was naturally abandoned, and the Corps of Gendarmes, while remaining under the Minister of the Interior, recovered a good deal of its previous authority. It serves now as a kind of supplement to the ordinary police, and is generally employed for matters in which secrecy is required. Unfortunately, it is not bound by those legal restrictions which protect the public against the arbitrary will of the ordinary authorities. In addition to its regular duties it has a vaguely defined roving commission to watch and arrest all persons who seem to it in any way dangerous or *suspectes,* and such persons may be kept in confinement for an indefinite time, or be exiled to some distant and inhospitable part of the Empire, without undergoing a regular trial. It is, in short, the ordinary instrument for punishing political

dreamers, suppressing secret societies, counteracting political agitations, and in general executing the extra-legal orders of the Government.

My relations with this anomalous branch of the administration were somewhat peculiar. After my experience with the Vice-Governor of Novgorod I determined to place myself above suspicion, and accordingly applied to the "Chef des Gendarmes" for some kind of official document which would prove to all officials with whom I might come in contact that I had no illicit designs. My request was granted, and I was furnished with the necessary documents; but I soon found that in seeking to avoid Scylla I had fallen into Charybdis. In calming official suspicions, I inadvertently aroused suspicions of another kind. The documents proving that I enjoyed the protection of the Government made many people suspect that I was an emissary of the gendarmerie, and greatly impeded me in my efforts to collect information from private sources. As the private were for me more important than the official sources of information, I refrained from asking for a renewal of the protection, and wandered about the country as an ordinary unprotected traveller. For some time I had no cause to regret this decision. I knew that I was pretty closely watched, and that my letters were occasionally opened in the post office, but I was subjected to no further inconvenience. At last, when I had nearly forgotten all about Scylla and Charybdis, I one night unexpectedly ran upon the former, and, to my astonishment, found myself formally arrested! The incident happened in this wise.

I had been visiting Austria and Servia, and after a short absence, returned to Russia through Moldavia. On arriving at the Pruth, which there formed the frontier, I found an officer of gendarmerie, whose duty it was to examine the passports of all passers-by. Though my passport was completely *en règle*, having been duly *visé* by the British and Russian Consuls at Galatz, this gentleman subjected me to a searching examination regarding my past life, actual occupation, and intentions for the future. On learning that I had been for more than two years travelling in Russia at my own expense, for the simple purpose of collecting

miscellaneous information, he looked incredulous, and seemed to have some doubts as to my being a genuine British subject; but when my statements were confirmed by my travelling companion, a Russian friend who carried awe-inspiring credentials, he countersigned my passport, and allowed us to depart. The inspection of our luggage by the custom-house officers was soon got over; and as we drove off to the neighbouring village, where we were to spend the night, we congratulated ourselves on having escaped for some time from all contact with the official world. In this we were "reckoning without the host." As the clock struck twelve that night I was roused by a loud knocking at my door, and after a good deal of parley, during which someone proposed to effect an entrance by force, I drew the bolt. The officer who had signed my passport entered, and said, in a stiff, official tone, "I must request you to remain here for twenty-four hours."

Not a little astonished by this announcement, I ventured to inquire the reason for this strange request.

"That is my business," was the laconic reply.

"Perhaps it is; still you must, on mature consideration, admit that I too have some interest in the matter. To my extreme regret I cannot comply with your request, and must leave at sunrise."

"You shall not leave. Give me your passport."

"Unless detained by force, I shall start at four o'clock; and as I wish to get some sleep before that time, I must request you instantly to retire. You had the right to stop me at the frontier, but you have no right to come and disturb me in this fashion, and I shall certainly report you. My passport I shall give to none but a regular officer of police."

Here followed a long discussion on the rights, privileges, and general character of the gendarmerie, during which my opponent gradually laid aside his dictatorial tone, and endeavoured to convince me that the honourable body to which he belonged was merely an ordinary branch of the administration. Though evidently irritated, he never, I must say, overstepped the bounds of politeness, and seemed only half convinced that he was justified in interfering with

my movements. When he found that he could not induce me to give up my passport he withdrew, and I again lay down to rest; but in about half an hour I was again disturbed. This time an officer of regular police entered, and demanded my "papers." To my inquiries as to the reason of all this disturbance, he replied, in a very polite, apologetic way, that he knew nothing about the reason, but he had received orders to arrest me, and must obey. To him I delivered my passport, on condition that I should receive a written receipt, and should be allowed to telegraph to the British ambassador in St. Petersburg.

Early next morning I telegraphed to the ambassador, and waited impatiently all day for a reply. I was allowed to walk about the village and the immediate vicinity, but of this permission I did not make much use. The village population was entirely Jewish, and Jews in that part of the world have a wonderful capacity for obtaining and spreading intelligence. By the early morning there was probably not a man, woman, or child in the place who had not heard of my arrest, and many of them felt a not unnatural curiosity to see the malefactor who had been caught by the police. To be stared at as a malefactor is not very agreeable, so I preferred to remain in my room, where, in the company of my friend, who kindly remained with me and made small jokes about the boasted liberty of British subjects, I spent the time pleasantly enough. The most disagreeable part of the affair was the uncertainty as to how many days, weeks, or months I might be detained, and on this point the police-officer would not even hazard a conjecture.

The detention came to an end sooner than I expected. On the following day—that is to say, about thirty-six hours after the nocturnal visit—the police officer brought me my passport, and at the same time a telegram from the British Embassy informed me that the central authorities had ordered my release. On my afterwards pertinaciously requesting an explanation of the unceremonious treatment to which I had been subjected, the Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that the authorities expected a person of my name to cross the frontier about that time with a quantity of false bank-notes, and that I had been arrested by mistake. I

must confess that this explanation, though official, seemed to me more ingenious than satisfactory, but I was obliged to accept it for what it was worth. At a later period I had again the misfortune to attract the attention of the secret police, but I reserve that incident till I come to speak of my relations with the revolutionists.

From all I have seen and heard of the gendarmerie I am disposed to believe that the officers are for the most part polite, well-educated men, who seek to fulfil their disagreeable duties in as inoffensive a way as possible. It must, however, be admitted that they are generally regarded with suspicion and dislike, even by those people who fear the attempts at revolutionary propaganda which it is the special duty of the gendarmerie to discover and suppress. Nor need this surprise us. Though very many people believe in the necessity of capital punishment, there are few who do not feel a decided aversion to the public executioner.

The only effectual remedy for administrative abuses lies in placing the administration under public control. This has been abundantly proved in Russia. All the efforts of the Tsars during many generations to check the evil by means of ingenious bureaucratic devices proved utterly fruitless. Even the iron will and gigantic energy of Nicholas I. were insufficient for the task. But when, after the Crimean War, there was a great moral awakening, and the Tsar called the people to his assistance, the stubborn, deep-rooted evils immediately disappeared. For a time venality and extortion were unknown, and since that period they have never been able to regain their old force.

At the present moment it cannot be said that the administration is immaculate, but it is incomparably purer than it was in old times. Though public opinion is no longer so powerful as it was in the early sixties, it is still strong enough to repress many malpractices which in the time of Nicholas I. and his predecessors were too frequent to attract attention. On this subject I shall have more to say hereafter.

If administrative abuses are rife in the Empire of the Tsars, it is not from any want of carefully prepared laws.

In no country in the world, perhaps, is the legislation more voluminous, and in theory, not only the officials, but even the Tsar himself, must obey the laws he has sanctioned, like the meanest of his subjects. This is one of those cases, not infrequent in Russia, in which theory differs somewhat from practice. In real life the Emperor may at any moment override the law by means of what is called a Supreme Command (*vysotchâishiye povelêniyé*), and a minister may "interpret" a law in any way he pleases by means of a circular. This is a frequent cause of complaint even among those who wish to uphold the Autocratic Power. In their opinion law-respecting autocracy wielded by a strong Tsar is an excellent institution for Russia; it is arbitrary autocracy wielded by irresponsible ministers that they object to.

As Englishmen may have some difficulty in imagining how laws can come into being without a Parliament or Legislative Chamber of some sort, I shall explain briefly how they were manufactured by the Russian bureaucratic machine before the creation of the Duma in 1906.

When a minister considered that some institution in his branch of the service required to be reformed, he began by submitting to the Emperor a formal report on the matter. If the Emperor agreed with his minister as to the necessity for reform, he ordered a Commission to be appointed for the purpose of considering the subject and preparing a definitive legislative project. The Commission set to work in what seemed a very thorough way. It first studied the history of the institution in Russia from the earliest times downwards—or rather, it listened to an essay on the subject, especially prepared for the occasion by some official who had a taste for historical studies and possessed an agreeable literary style. The next step—to use a phrase which often occurs in the minutes of such Commissions—consisted in "shedding the light of science on the question" (*prolît' na dyêlo svêt naúki*). This important operation was performed by preparing a memorial containing the history of similar institutions in foreign countries, and an elaborate exposition of numerous theories held by French and German philosophical jurists. In these memorials it was often considered necessary to include every European country except Turkey;

and sometimes the small German States and principal Swiss cantons were treated separately.

To illustrate the character of these wonderful productions, let me give an example. From a pile of such papers lying before me I take one almost at random. It is a memorial relating to a proposed reform of benevolent institutions. First I find a philosophical disquisition on benevolence in general; next, some remarks on the Talmud and the Koran; then a reference to the treatment of paupers in Athens after the Peloponnesian War, and in Rome under the emperors; then some vague observations on the Middle Ages, with a quotation that was evidently intended to be Latin; lastly comes an account of the poor-laws of modern times, in which I meet with "the Anglo-Saxon domination," King Egbert, King Ethelred; "a remarkable book of Icelandic laws, called Hragas"; Sweden and Norway, France, Holland, Belgium, Prussia, and nearly all the minor German States. The most wonderful thing is that all this mass of historical information, extending from the Talmud to the most recent legislation of Hesse-Darmstadt, is compressed into twenty-one octavo pages! The doctrinal part of the memorandum is not less rich. Many respected names from the literature of Germany, France, and England are forcibly dragged in; and the general conclusion drawn from this mass of raw, undigested materials is believed to be "the latest results of science."

Does the reader suspect that I have here chosen an extremely exceptional case? If so, let us take the next paper in the file. It refers to a project of law regarding imprisonment for debt. On the first page I find references to "the Salic laws of the fifth century," and the "Assises de Jerusalem, A.D. 1099." That, I think, will suffice. Let us pass, then, to the next step.

When the quintessence of human wisdom and experience had thus been extracted, the Commission considered how the valuable product might be applied to Russia, so as to harmonise with the existing general conditions and local peculiarities. For a man of practical mind this was, of course, the most interesting and most important part of the operation, but from Russian legislators it received

comparatively little attention. Very often have I turned to this section of official papers in order to obtain information regarding the actual state of the country, and in every case I was grievously disappointed. Vague general phrases, founded on *à priori* reasoning rather than on observation, together with a few statistical tables—which the cautious investigator should avoid as he would an ambuscade—were too often all that was to be found. Through the thin veil of pseudo-erudition the real facts were clear enough. These philosophical legislators, who spent their lives in the official atmosphere of St. Petersburg, knew as much about Russia as the genuine cockney knows about Greater Britain, and in this part of their work they derived no assistance from the learned German treatises which supplied an unlimited amount of historical facts and philosophical speculation.

From the Commission the project passed to the Council of State, where it was certainly examined and criticised, and perhaps modified, but was not likely to be improved from the practical point of view, because the members of the Council were merely *ci-devant* members of similar Commissions, hardened by a few additional years of official routine. The Council was, in fact, an assembly of *tchinóvniks* who knew little of the practical, everyday wants of the unofficial classes. No merchant, manufacturer, or farmer ever entered its sacred precincts, so that its bureaucratic serenity was rarely disturbed by practical objections. It is not surprising, therefore, that it occasionally passed laws which were found at once to be absolutely unworkable.

From the Council of State the Bill was taken to the Emperor, and he generally began by examining the signatures. The "Ayes" were in one column and the "Noes" in another. If his Majesty was not specially acquainted with the matter—and he could not possibly be acquainted with all the matters submitted to him—he usually signed with the majority, or on the side where he saw the names of officials in whose judgment he had special confidence; but if he had strong views of his own, he placed his signature in whichever column he thought fit, and it outweighed the signatures of any number of Councillors. In this way a small minority might be transformed into a majority.

When the important question, for example, as to how far Latin and Greek should be taught in the higher schools was considered by the Council, only two members signed in favour of classical education, which was excessively unpopular at the moment; but the Emperor Alexander III., disregarding public opinion and the advice of his Councillors, threw his signature into the lighter scale, and the classicists were victorious.

CHAPTER XXV

MOSCOW AND THE SLAVOPHILS

In the last chapter, as in many of the preceding ones, the reader must have observed that at one moment there was a sudden break, almost a solution of continuity, in Russian national life. The Tsardom of Muscovy, with its ancient Oriental costumes and Byzantine traditions, unexpectedly disappears, and the Russian Empire, clad in modern garb and animated with the spirit of modern progress, steps forward uninvited into European history. Of the older civilisation, if civilisation it can be called, very little survived the political transformation, and that little is generally supposed to hover ghostlike around Kief and Moscow. To one or other of these towns, therefore, the student who desires to learn something of genuine old Russian life, untainted by foreign influences, naturally wends his way.

For my part I thought first of settling for a time in Kief, the oldest and most revered of Russian cities, where missionaries from Byzantium first planted Christianity on Russian soil, and where thousands of pilgrims still assemble yearly from far and near, to prostrate themselves before the Holy Icons in the churches and to venerate the relics of the blessed saints and martyrs in the catacombs of the great monastery. I soon discovered, however, that Kief, though it represents in a certain sense the Byzantine traditions so dear to the Russian people, is not a good point of observation for studying the Russian character. It was early exposed to the ravages of the nomadic tribes of the Steppe, and when it was liberated from those incursions it was seized by the Poles and Lithuanians, and remained for centuries under their domination. Only in comparatively recent times did it begin to recover its Russian character—a university having been created there for that purpose after the Polish insurrection of 1830. Even now the process of Russification

is far from complete, and the Russian elements in the population are far from being pure in the nationalist sense.

The city and the surrounding country are, in fact, Little-Russian rather than Great-Russian, and between these two sections of the population there are profound differences—differences of language, costume, traditions, popular songs, proverbs, folk-lore, domestic arrangements, mode of life, and communal organisation. In these and other respects the Little-Russians, South-Russians, Ruthenes, or Khokhlý, as they are variously designated, differ from the Great-Russians of the North, who form the predominant factor in the Empire, and who have given to that wonderful structure its essential characteristics. Indeed, if I did not fear to ruffle unnecessarily the patriotic susceptibilities of my Great-Russian friends who have a pet theory on this subject, I should say that we have here two distinct nationalities, farther apart from each other than the English and the Scotch. The differences are due, I believe, partly to ethnographical peculiarities and partly to historic conditions.

As it was the energetic Great-Russian empire-builders and not the half-dreamy, half-astute, sympathetic descendants of the Free Cossacks that I wanted to study, I soon abandoned my idea of settling in the Holy City on the Dnieper, and chose Moscow as my point of observation; and here, during several years, I spent regularly some of the winter months.

The first few weeks of my stay in the ancient capital of the Tsars were spent in the ordinary manner of intelligent tourists. After mastering the contents of a guide-book I carefully inspected all the officially recognised objects of interest—the Kremlin, with its picturesque towers and six centuries of historical associations; the Cathedrals, containing the venerated tombs of martyrs, saints, and Tsars; the old churches, with their quaint, archaic, richly decorated Icons; the "Patriarchs' Treasury," rich in jewelled ecclesiastical vestments and vessels of silver and gold; the ancient and the modern palace; the Ethnological Museum showing the costumes and physiognomy of all the various races in the Empire; the archæological collections, containing many

objects that recall the barbaric splendour of old Muscovy; the picture-gallery, with Ivanof's gigantic picture, in which patriotic Russian critics discover occult merits that place it above anything that Western Europe has yet produced! Of course I climbed up to the top of the tall belfry which rejoices in the name of "Ivan the Great," and looked down on the "gilded domes" * of the churches, and bright green roofs of the houses, and, far away beyond these, the gently undulating country with the "Sparrow Hills," from which Napoleon is said, in cicerone language, to have "gazed upon the doomed city." Occasionally I walked about the bazaars in the hope of finding interesting specimens of genuine native art-industry, and was urgently invited to purchase every conceivable article which I did not want. At midday or in the evening I visited the most noted *traktirs*, and made the acquaintance of the caviare, sturgeons, sterlets, and other native delicacies for which these institutions are famous—deafened the while by the deep tones of the colossal barrel-organ, out of all proportion to the size of the room; and in order to see how the common people spent their evenings I looked in at some of the more modest *traktirs*, and gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, at the enormous quantity of weak tea which the inmates consumed.

Since these first weeks of my sojourn in Moscow forty years have passed, and many of my early impressions have been blurred by time, but one scene remains deeply graven on my memory. It was Easter Eve, and I had gone with a friend to the Kremlin to witness the customary religious ceremonies. Though the rain was falling heavily, an immense number of people had assembled in and around the Cathedral of the Assumption. The crowd was of the most mixed kind. There stood the patient bearded muzhik in his well-worn sheepskin; the big, burly, self-satisfied merchant in his long black glossy *kaftan;* the noble with fashionable great-coat and umbrella; thinly clad old women shivering in the cold, and bright-eyed young damsels with their warm cloaks drawn closely round them; old men with

* Allowance must be made here for poetical licence. In reality, very few of the domes are gilt. The great majority of them are painted green, like the roofs of the houses.

long beard, wallet, and pilgrim's staff; and mischievous urchins with faces for the moment preternaturally demure. Each right hand, of old and young alike, held a lighted taper, and these myriads of flickering little flames produced a curious illumination, giving to the surrounding buildings a weird picturesqueness which they do not possess in broad daylight. All stood patiently waiting for the announcement of the glad tidings: "He is risen!"

As midnight approached, the hum of voices gradually ceased, till, as the clock struck twelve, the deep-toned bell on "Ivan the Great" began to toll, and in answer to this signal all the bells in Moscow suddenly sent forth a merry peal. Each bell—and their name is legion—seemed frantically desirous of drowning its neighbour's voice, the solemn boom of the great one overhead mingling curiously with the sharp, fussy "ting-a-ting-ting" of diminutive rivals. If demons dwell in Moscow and dislike bell-ringing, as is generally supposed, then there must have been at that moment a general stampede of the powers of darkness such as is described by Milton in his poem on the Nativity; and as if this deafening din were not enough, big guns were fired in rapid succession from a battery of artillery close at hand! The noise seemed to stimulate the religious enthusiasm, and the general excitement had a wonderful effect on a Russian friend who accompanied me. When in his normal condition that gentleman was a quiet, undemonstrative person, devoted to science, an ardent adherent of Western civilisation in general and of Darwinism in particular, and a thorough sceptic with regard to all forms of religious belief; but the influence of the surroundings was too much for his philosophical equanimity. For a moment his orthodox Moscovite soul awoke from its sceptical, cosmopolitan lethargy. After crossing himself repeatedly—an act of devotion which I had never before seen him perform—he grasped my arm, and pointing to the crowd, said in an exultant tone of voice, "Look there! There is a sight that you can see nowhere but in the 'White-stone City.'* Are not the Russians a religious people?"

* Bêlokámenny, meaning "of white stone," is one of the popular names of Moscow

To this unexpected question I gave a monosyllabic assent, and refrained from disturbing my friend's new-born enthusiasm by any discordant note; but I must confess that this sudden outburst of deafening noise and the dazzling light aroused in my heretical breast feelings of a warlike rather than a religious kind. For a moment I could imagine myself in ancient Moscow, and could fancy the people being called out to repel a Mongol horde already thundering at the gates!

The service lasted two or three hours, and terminated with the curious ceremony of blessing the Easter cakes, which were ranged—each one with a lighted taper stuck in it—in long rows outside the cathedral. A not less curious custom practised at this season is that of exchanging kisses of fraternal love. Theoretically one ought to embrace and be embraced by all present—indicating thereby that all are brethren in Christ—but the refinements of modern life have made innovations in the practice, and most people confine their salutations to their friends and acquaintances. When two friends meet during that night or on the following day, the one says, "Christós voskrés!" ("Christ hath risen!"); and the other replies, "Vo ístinê voskrés!" ("In truth He hath risen!"). They then kiss each other three times on the right and left cheek alternately. The custom is more or less observed in all classes of society, and the Emperor himself conforms to it.

This reminds me of an anecdote which is related of the Emperor Nicholas I., tending to show that he was not so devoid of kindly human feelings as his imperial and imperious exterior suggested. On coming out of his cabinet one Easter morning, he addressed to the soldier who was mounting guard at the door the ordinary words of salutation, "Christ hath risen!" and received, instead of the ordinary reply, a flat contradiction—"Not at all, your Imperial Majesty!" Astounded by such an unexpected answer—for no one ventured to dissent from Nicholas even in the most guarded and respectful terms—he instantly demanded an explanation. The soldier, trembling at his own audacity, explained that he was a Jew, and could not conscientiously admit the fact of the resurrection. This

boldness for conscience' sake so pleased the Tsar that he gave the man a handsome Easter present.

Quarter of a century after the Easter Eve above mentioned —or, to be quite accurate, on the 26th of May, 1896—I again find myself in the Kremlin on the occasion of a great religious ceremony — a ceremony which shows that the "White-stone City" on the Moskvá is still in some respects the capital of Holy Russia. This time my post of observation is inside the cathedral, which is artistically draped with purple hangings, and crowded with the most distinguished personages of the Empire, all arrayed in gorgeous apparel —Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses, Imperial Highnesses and High Excellencies, Metropolitans and Archbishops, Senators and Councillors of State, Generals and Court dignitaries. In the centre of the building, on a high, richly decorated platform, sits the Emperor with his Imperial Consort, and his mother, the widowed Consort of Alexander III. Though Nicholas II. has not the colossal stature which has distinguished so many of the Románovs, he is well built, holds himself erect, and shows a quiet dignity in his movements; while his face, which resembles that of his cousin King George V., wears a kindly, sympathetic expression. The Empress looks even more than usually beautiful, in a low dress cut in the ancient fashion, her thick brown hair, dressed most simply without jewellery or other ornaments, falling in two long ringlets over her white shoulders. For the moment, her attire is much simpler than that of the Empress Dowager, who wears a diamond crown, and a great mantle of gold brocade, lined and edged with ermine, the long train displaying in bright-coloured embroidery the heraldic double-headed eagle of the Imperial arms.

Each of these august personages sits on a throne of curious workmanship, consecrated by ancient historic associations. That of the Emperor, the gift of a Shah of Persia to Ivan the Terrible, and commonly called the Throne of Tsar Michael, the founder of the Románov dynasty, is covered with gold plaques, and studded with hundreds of big, roughly cut precious stones, mostly rubies, emeralds, and turquoises. Of still older date is the throne of the young

Empress, for it was given by Pope Paul II. to Tsar Ivan III., grandfather of the Terrible, on the occasion of his marriage with a niece of the last Byzantine Emperor. More recent but not less curious is that of the Empress' Dowager. It is the throne of Tsar Alexis, the father of Peter the Great, covered with countless and priceless diamonds, rubies, and pearls, and surmounted by an Imperial eagle of solid gold, together with golden statuettes of St. Peter and St. Nicholas the miracle-worker. Over each throne is a canopy of purple velvet fringed with gold, out of which rise stately plumes representing the national colours.

Their Majesties have come hither, in accordance with time-honoured custom, to be crowned in this old Cathedral of the Assumption, the central point of the Kremlin, within a stone-throw of the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, in which lie the remains of the old Grand Dukes and Tsars of Muscovy. Already the Emperor has read aloud, in a clear, unfaltering voice, from a richly bound parchment folio, held by the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, the Orthodox creed; and his Eminence, after invoking on his Majesty the blessing of the Holy Spirit, has performed the mystic rite of placing his hands in the form of a cross on the Imperial forehead. Thus all is ready for the most important part of the solemn ceremony. Standing erect, the Emperor doffs his small diadem and puts on with his own hands the great diamond crown, offered respectfully by the Metropolitan; then he reseats himself on his throne, holding in his right hand the Sceptre and in his left the Orb of Dominion. After sitting thus in state for a few minutes, he stands up and proceeds to crown his august spouse kneeling before him. First he touches her forehead with his own crown, and then he places on her head a smaller one, which is immediately attached to her hair by four ladies-in-waiting, dressed in the old Muscovite Court costume. At the same time her Majesty is invested with a mantle of heavy gold brocade, similar to those of the Emperor and Empress Dowager, lined and bordered with ermine.

Thus crowned and robed, their Majesties sit in state, while a proto-deacon reads, in a loud, stentorian voice, the long list of sonorous hereditary titles belonging of right to

the Imperator and Autocrat of All the Russias, and the choir chants a prayer invoking long life and happiness—"Many years! Many years! Many years!"—on the high and mighty possessor of the titles aforesaid. And now begins the Mass, celebrated with a pomp and magnificence that can be witnessed only once or twice in a generation. Sixty gorgeously robed ecclesiastical dignitaries of the highest orders fulfil their various functions with due solemnity and unction; but the magnificence of the vestments and the pomp of the ceremonial are soon forgotten in the exquisite solemnising music, as the deep double-bass tones of the adult singers in the background—carefully selected for the occasion in all parts of the Empire—peal forth as from a great organ, and blend marvellously with the clear, soft, gentle notes of the red-robed chorister boys in front of the Iconostase.

Listening with intense emotion, I involuntarily recall to mind Fra Angelico's pictures of angelic choirs, and cannot help thinking that the pious old Florentine, whose soul was attuned to all that was sacred and beautiful, must have heard in imagination such music as this. So strong is the impression that the subsequent details of the long ceremony, including the anointing with the holy chrism, fail to engrave themselves on my memory. One incident, however, remains; and if it had happened in an earlier and more superstitious age it would doubtless have been chronicled as an omen full of significance. As the Emperor is on the point of descending from the dais, duly crowned and anointed, a straggling ray of sunshine steals through one of the narrow upper windows and, traversing the dimly lit edifice, falls full on the Imperial crown, lighting up for a moment the great mass of diamonds with a hundredfold brilliance.

In a detailed account of the Coronation which I wrote on leaving the Kremlin, I find the following: "The magnificent ceremony is at an end, and now Nicholas II. is the crowned Emperor and anointed Autocrat of All the Russias. May the cares of Empire rest lightly on him! That must be the earnest prayer of every loyal subject and every sincere well-wisher, for of all living mortals he is perhaps the one who has been entrusted by Providence with the greatest power and the greatest responsibilities." In writing those words I

did not foresee how heavy his responsibilities would one day weigh upon him, when his Empire would be sorely tried by foreign war and internal discontent.

One more of these old Moscow reminiscences and I have done. A day or two after the Coronation I saw the Khodinskoye Polye, a great plain in the outskirts of Moscow, strewn with hundreds of corpses! During the previous night enormous crowds from the city and the surrounding districts had collected here in order to receive at sunrise, by the Tsar's command, a little memento of the coronation ceremony, in the form of a packet containing a metal cup and a few eatables; and as day dawned, in their anxiety to get near the row of booths from which the distribution was to be made, about two thousand had been crushed to death. It was a sight more horrible than a battlefield, because among the dead were a large proportion of women and children, terribly mutilated in the struggle. Altogether, "a sight to shudder at, not to see!"

To return to the remark of my friend in the Kremlin on Easter Eve, the Russians in general, and the Moscovites in particular, as the quintessence of all that is Russian, are certainly a religious people, but their piety sometimes finds modes of expression which rather shock the Protestant mind. As an instance of these, I may mention the domiciliary visits of the Iberian Madonna. This celebrated Icon, for reasons which I have never heard satisfactorily explained, is held in peculiar veneration by the Moscovites, and occupies in popular estimation a position analogous to the tutelary deities of ancient pagan cities. Thus when Napoleon was about to enter the city in 1812, the populace clamorously called upon the Metropolitan to take the Madonna, and lead them out armed with hatchets against the hosts of the infidel; and when the Tsar visits Moscow, he generally drives straight from the railway station to the little chapel where the Icon resides—near one of the entrances to the Kremlin—and there offers up a short prayer. Every Orthodox Russian, as he passes this chapel, uncovers and crosses himself, and whenever a religious service is performed in it there is always a considerable group of worshippers.

Some of the richer inhabitants, however, are not content

with thus performing their devotions in public before the Icon. They like to have the holy picture from time to time in their houses, and the ecclesiastical authorities think fit to humour this strange fancy. Accordingly every morning the Iberian Madonna may be seen driving about the city from one house to another in a carriage and four! The carriage may be at once recognised, not from any peculiarity in its structure, for it is an ordinary landau such as may be obtained at livery stables, but by the fact that the coachman sits bare-headed, and all the people in the street uncover and cross themselves as it passes. Arrived at the house to which it has been invited, the Icon is carried through all the rooms, and in the principal apartment a short religious service is performed before it. As it is being brought in or taken away, female servants may sometimes be seen to kneel on the floor so that it may be carried over them. During its absence from its chapel it is replaced by a copy not easily distinguishable from the original, and thus the devotions of the faithful and the flow of pecuniary contributions do not suffer interruption. These contributions, together with the sums paid for the domiciliary visits, amount to a considerable yearly sum, and go—if I am rightly informed—to swell the revenues of the Metropolitan.

A single drive or stroll through Moscow will suffice to convince the traveller, even if he knows nothing of Russian history, that the city is not, like its modern rival on the Neva, the artificial creation of a far-seeing, self-willed autocrat, but rather a natural product which has grown up slowly and been modified according to the constantly changing wants of the population. A few of the streets have been Europeanised—in all except the paving, which is everywhere execrably Asiatic—to suit the tastes of those who have adopted European culture, but the great majority of them still retain much of their ancient character and primitive irregularity. As soon as we diverge from the principal thoroughfares, we find one-storied houses—some of them still of wood—which appear to have been transported bodily from the country, with courtyard, garden, stables, and other appurtenances. The whole is no doubt a little compressed, for land has here a certain value, but the character is in no

way changed, and we have some difficulty in believing that we are not in the suburbs but near the centre of a great city. There is nothing that can by any possibility be called street architecture. Though there is unmistakable evidence of the streets having been laid out according to a preconceived plan, many of them show clearly that in their infancy they had a wayward will of their own, and they still bend to the right or left without any topographical justification.

The houses, too, display considerable individuality of character, having evidently during the course of their construction paid no attention to their neighbours. Hence we find no regularly built terraces, crescents, or squares. There is, it is true, a double circle of boulevards, but the houses which flank them have none of that regularity which we commonly associate with the term. Dilapidated buildings which in West-European cities would hide themselves in some narrow lane or back slum here stand composedly in the face of day by the side of a palatial residence, without having the least consciousness of the incongruity of their position, just as the unsophisticated muzhik in his unsavoury sheepskin can stand in the midst of a crowd of well-dressed people without feeling at all awkward or uncomfortable.

All this incongruity, however, is speedily disappearing. Moscow has become the centre of a great network of railways, and the commercial and industrial capital of the Empire, with a rapidly increasing population of about a million and a half. The value of land and property is being doubled and trebled, and building speculations, with the aid of credit institutions of various kinds, are being carried on with feverish rapidity. Well may the men of the old school complain that the world is turned upside down, and regret the old times of traditional somnolence and comfortable routine! Those good old times are gone now, never to return. The ancient capital, which long gloried in its past historical associations, now glories in its present commercial prosperity, and looks forward with confidence to the future. Even the Slavophils, the obstinate champions of the ultra-Moscovite spirit, have changed with the times and descended to the level of ordinary prosaic life. These men, who formerly spent years in seeking to determine the place of

Moscow in the past and future history of humanity, have —to their honour be it said—become in these latter days town councillors, and have devoted much of their time to devising ways and means of improving the drainage and the street paving! But I am anticipating in a most unjustifiable way. I ought first to tell the reader who the early Slavophils were, and why they sought to correct the commonly received conceptions of universal history.

The reader may have heard of the Slavophils as a set of fanatics who, about the middle of last century, were wont to go about in what they considered the ancient Russian costume, who wore beards in defiance of Peter the Great's celebrated ukaz and Nicholas I.'s clearly expressed wish anent shaving, who gloried in Moscovite barbarism, and had solemnly "sworn a feud" against European civilisation and enlightenment. By the tourists of the time who visited Moscow they were regarded as among the most noteworthy lions of the place, and were commonly depicted in not very flattering colours. At the beginning of the Crimean War they were among the extreme Chauvinists who urged the necessity of planting the Greek cross on the desecrated dome of St. Sophia in Constantinople, and hoped to see the Emperor proclaimed "Panslavonic Tsar"; and after the termination of the war they were frequently accused of inventing Turkish atrocities, stirring up discontent among the Slav subjects of the Sultan, and secretly plotting for the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire. All this was known to me before I went to Russia, and I had consequently invested the Slavophils with a halo of romance. Shortly after my arrival in St. Petersburg I heard something more which tended to increase my interest in them—they had caused, I was told, great trepidation in the highest official circles by petitioning the Emperor to resuscitate a certain ancient institution, called a *Zemski Sobór,* which might be made to serve the purposes of a Parliament! This threw a new light upon them; under the disguise of archæological Conservatives they were evidently aiming at important Liberal reforms.

As a foreigner and a heretic, I expected a very cold and distant reception from these uncompromising champions of Russian nationality and the Orthodox faith; but in this I

was agreeably disappointed. By all of them I was received in the most amiable and friendly way, and I soon discovered that my preconceived ideas of them were very far from the truth. Instead of wild fanatics I found quiet, extremely intelligent, highly educated gentlemen, speaking foreign languages with ease and elegance, and deeply imbued with that Western culture which they were commonly supposed to despise. One of them, and not the least remarkable, had been partly educated in Germany, and was the most thoroughgoing Hegelian I have ever known. On the whole I was very favourably impressed by them, and this first impression was amply confirmed by subsequent experience during several years of friendly intercourse. They always showed themselves men of earnest character and strong convictions, but they never said or did anything that could justify the appellation of fanatics. Like all philosophical theorists, they often allowed their logic to blind them to facts, but their reasonings were very plausible—so plausible, indeed, that, had I been a Russian, they would have almost persuaded me to be a Slavophil, at least during the time they were talking to me.

To understand their doctrine we must know something of its origin and development.

The origin of the Slavophil sentiment, which must not be confounded with the Slavophil doctrine, is to be sought in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when the Tsars of Muscovy were introducing innovations in Church and State. These innovations were profoundly displeasing to the people. A large portion of the lower classes, as I have related in a previous chapter, sought refuge in Old Ritualism or sectarianism, and imagined that Tsar Peter, who called himself by the heretical title of "Imperator," was an emanation of the Evil Principle. The nobles did not go quite so far. They remained members of the official Church, and restricted themselves to hinting that Peter was the son, not of Satan, but of a German surgeon—a lineage which, according to the conceptions of the time, was a little less objectionable; but most of them were very hostile to the changes, and complained bitterly of the new burdens which these changes entailed. Under Peter's immediate successors, when not

only the principles of administration but also many of the administrators were German, their hostility greatly increased.

So long as the innovations appeared only in the official activity of the Government, the patriotic, conservative spirit was obliged to keep silence; but when the foreign influence spread to the social life of the Court aristocracy, the opposition began to find a literary expression. In the time of Catherine II., when Gallomania was at its height in Court circles, comedies and satirical journals ridiculed those who, "blinded by some externally brilliant gifts of foreigners, not only prefer foreign countries to their native land, but even despise their fellow-countrymen, and think that a Russian ought to borrow all—even personal character. As if Nature, arranging all things with such wisdom, and bestowing on all regions the gifts and customs which are appropriate to the climate, had been so unjust as to refuse to the Russians a character of their own! As if she condemned them to wander over all regions, and to adopt by bits the various customs of various nations, in order to compose out of the mixture a new character appropriate to no nation whatever!" Numerous passages of this kind might be quoted, attacking the "monkeyism" and "parrotism" of those who indiscriminately adopted foreign manners and customs—those who

> "Sauntered Europe round,
> And gathered ev'ry vice in ev'ry ground."

Sometimes the terms and metaphors employed were more forcible than refined. One satirical journal, for instance, relates an amusing story about certain little Russian pigs that went to foreign lands to enlighten their understanding, and came back to their country full-grown swine. The national pride was wounded by the thought that Russians could be called "clever apes who feed on foreign intelligence," and many writers, stung by such reproaches, fell into the opposite extreme, discovering unheard-of excellences in the Russian mind and character, and vociferously decrying everything foreign in order to place these imagined excellences in a stronger light by contrast. Even when they recognised that their country was not quite so advanced in civilisation as certain other nations, they congratulated

themselves on the fact, and invented by way of justification an ingenious theory, which was afterwards developed by the Slavophils. "The nations of the West," they said, "began to live before us, and are consequently more advanced than we are; but we have on that account no reason to envy them, for we can profit by their errors, and avoid those deep-rooted evils from which they are suffering. He who has just been born is happier than he who is dying."

Thus, we see, a patriotic reaction against the introduction of foreign institutions and the inordinate admiration of foreign culture already existed in Russia in the eighteenth century. It did not, however, take the form of a philosophical theory till a much later period, when a similar movement was going on in various countries of Western Europe.

After the overthrow of the great Napoleonic Empire a reaction against cosmopolitanism took place in Germany and a romantic enthusiasm for nationality spread over Europe like an epidemic. Blind enthusiastic patriotism became the fashionable sentiment of the time. Each nation took to admiring itself complacently, to praising its own character and achievements, and to idealising its historical and mythical past. National peculiarities, "local colour," ancient customs, traditional superstitions—in short, everything that a nation believed to be specially and exclusively its own—now raised an enthusiasm similar to that which had been formerly excited by cosmopolitan conceptions founded on the law of Nature. The movement produced good and evil results. In serious minds it led to a deep and conscientious study of history, national literature, popular mythology, and the like; whilst in frivolous, inflammable spirits it gave birth merely to a torrent of patriotic fervour and rhetorical exaggeration. The Slavophils were the Russian representatives of this nationalistic reaction, and displayed both its serious and its frivolous elements.

Among the most important products of this movement in Germany was the Hegelian theory of universal history. According to Hegel's views, which were generally accepted by those who occupied themselves with philosophical questions, universal history was described as "Progress in the consciousness of freedom" (*Fortschritt im Bewusstsein*

der Freiheit). In each period of the world's history, it was explained, some one nation or race had been entrusted with the high mission of enabling the Absolute Reason, or Weltgeist, to express itself in objective existence, while the other nations and races had for the time no metaphysical justification for their existence, and no higher duty than to imitate slavishly the favoured rival in which the Weltgeist had for the moment chosen to incorporate itself. The incarnation had taken place first in the Eastern Monarchies, then in Greece, next in Rome, and lastly in the Germanic race; and it was generally assumed, if not openly asserted, that this mystical Metempsychosis of the Absolute was now at an end. The cycle of existence was complete. In the Germanic peoples the Weltgeist had found its highest and final expression.

Russians in general knew nothing about German philosophy, and were consequently not in any way affected by these ideas, but there was in Moscow a small group of young men who ardently studied German literature and metaphysics, and they were much shocked by Hegel's views. Ever since the brilliant reign of Catherine II., who had defeated the Turks and had dreamed of resuscitating the Byzantine Empire, and especially since the memorable events of 1812-15, when Alexander I. appeared as the liberator of enthralled Europe and the arbiter of her destinies, Russians were firmly convinced that their country was destined to play a most important part in human history. Already the great Russian historian Karamzín had declared that henceforth Clio must be silent, or accord to Russia a prominent place in the history of the nations. Now, by the Hegelian theory, the whole of the Slav race was left out in the cold, with no high mission, with no new truths to divulge, with nothing better to do, in fact, than to imitate the Germans.

The patriotic philosophers of Moscow could not, of course, adopt this view. Whilst accepting the fundamental principles, they declared the theory to be incomplete. The incompleteness lay in the assumption that humanity had already entered on the final stages of its development. The Teutonic nations were perhaps for the moment the leaders

in the march of civilisation, but there was no reason to suppose that they would always retain that privileged position. On the contrary, there were already symptoms that their ascendancy was drawing to a close. "Western Europe," it was said, "presents a strange, saddening spectacle. Opinion struggles against opinion, power against power, throne against throne. Science, Art, and Religion, the three chief motors of social life, have lost their force. We venture to make an assertion which to many at present may seem strange, but which will be in a few years only too evident: Western Europe is on the high road to ruin! We Russians, on the contrary, are young and fresh, and have taken no part in the crimes of Europe. We have a great mission to fulfil. Our name is already inscribed on the tablets of victory, and now we have to inscribe our spirit in the history of the human mind. A higher kind of victory —the victory of Science, Art, and Faith—awaits us on the ruins of tottering Europe!" *

This conclusion was supported by arguments drawn from history—or, at least, what was believed to be history. The European world was represented as being composed of two hemispheres—the Eastern, or Græco-Slavonic, on the one hand, and the Western, or Roman Catholic and Protestant, on the other. These two hemispheres, it was said, are distinguished from each other by many fundamental characteristics. In both of them Christianity formed originally the basis of civilisation, but in the West it became distorted and gave a false direction to the intellectual development. By placing the logical reason of the learned above the conscience of the whole Church, Roman Catholicism produced Protestantism, which proclaimed the right of private judgment and consequently became split up into innumerable sects. The dry, logical spirit which was thus fostered created a purely intellectual, one-sided philosophy, which must end in pure scepticism, by blinding men to those great truths which lie above the sphere of reasoning and logic. The Græco-Slavonic world, on the contrary, having accepted Christianity not from Rome, but from Byzantium, received pure Orthodoxy and true enlightenment, and was thus saved

* These words were written by Prince Odóevski.

alike from Papal tyranny and from Protestant freethinking. Hence the Eastern Christians have preserved faithfully not only the ancient dogmas, but also the ancient spirit of Christianity—that spirit of pious humility, resignation, and brotherly love which Christ taught by precept and example. If they have not yet a philosophy, they will create one, and it will far surpass all previous systems; for in the writings of the Greek Fathers are to be found the germs of a broader, a deeper, and a truer philosophy than the dry, meagre rationalism of the West—a philosophy founded not on the logical faculty alone, but on the broader basis of human nature as a whole.

The fundamental characteristics of the Græco-Slavonic world—so runs the Slavophil theory—have been displayed in the history of Russia. Throughout Western Christendom the principles of individual judgment and reckless individual egotism have exhausted the social forces and brought society to the verge of incurable anarchy and inevitable dissolution, whereas the social and political history of Russia has been harmonious and peaceful. It presents no struggles between the different social classes, and no conflicts between Church and State. All the factors have worked in unison, and the development has been guided by the spirit of pure Orthodoxy. But in this harmonious picture there is one big, ugly black spot—Peter, falsely styled "the Great," and his so-called reforms. Instead of following the wise policy of his ancestors, Peter rejected the national traditions and principles, and applied to his country, which belonged to the Eastern world, the principles of Western civilisation. His reforms, conceived in a foreign spirit, and elaborated by men who did not possess the national instincts, were forced upon the nation against its will, and the result was precisely what might have been expected. The "broad Slavonic nature" could not be controlled by institutions which had been invented by narrow-minded, pedantic German bureaucrats, and, like another Samson, it pulled down the building in which foreign legislators sought to confine it.

The attempt to introduce foreign culture had a still worse effect. The upper classes, charmed and dazzled by the glare

and glitter of Western science, threw themselves impulsively on the newly found treasures, and thereby condemned themselves to moral slavery and intellectual sterility. Fortunately —and herein lay one of the fundamental principles of the Slavophil doctrine—the imported civilisation had not at all infected the common people. Through all the changes which the Administration and the Noblesse underwent the peasantry preserved religiously in their hearts "the living legacy of antiquity," the essence of Russian nationality, "a clear spring welling up living waters, hidden and unknown, but powerful." * To recover this lost legacy by studying the character, customs, and institutions of the peasantry, to lead the educated classes back to the path from which they had strayed, and to re-establish that intellectual and moral unity which had been disturbed by the foreign importations—such was the task which the Slavophils proposed to themselves.

Deeply imbued with that romantic spirit which distorted all the intellectual activity of the time, the Slavophils often indulged in the wildest exaggerations, condemning everything foreign and praising everything Russian. When in this mood they saw in the history of the West nothing but violence, slavery, and egotism, and in that of their own country free-will, liberty, and peace. The fact that Russia did not possess free political institutions was adduced as a precious fruit of that spirit of Christian resignation and self-sacrifice which places the Russian at such an immeasurable height above the proud, selfish European; and because Russia possessed few of the comforts and conveniences of common life, the West was accused of having made comfort its God!

We need not, however, dwell on these puerilities, which only gained for their authors the reputation of being ignorant, narrow-minded men, imbued with a hatred of enlightenment and desirous of leading their country back to its primitive barbarism. What the Slavophils really condemned, at least in their calmer moments, was not European culture, but the uncritical, indiscriminate adoption of it by their countrymen. Their tirades against foreign

* This was one of the favourite themes of Khomiakóv, the Slavophil poet and theologian, father of Mr. Khomiakóv, who was president of the Duma.

culture must appear excusable when we remember that many Russians of the upper ranks could speak and write French more correctly than their native language, and that even the great national poet Pushkin was not ashamed to confess —what was not true, and a mere piece of affectation—that "the language of Europe" was more familiar to him than his mother-tongue!

The Slavophil doctrine, though it made a great noise in the world, never found many adherents. The society of St. Petersburg regarded it as one of those harmless provincial eccentricities which are always to be found in Moscow. In the modern capital, with its foreign name, its streets and squares on the European model, its palaces and churches in the Renaissance style, and its passionate love of everything French, any attempt to resuscitate the old Boyaric times would have been eminently ridiculous. Indeed, hostility to St. Petersburg and to "the Petersburg period of Russian history" is one of the characteristic traits of genuine Slavophilism. In Moscow the doctrine found a more appropriate home. There the ancient churches, with the tombs of Grand Princes and holy martyrs, the palace in which the Tsars of Muscovy had lived, the Kremlin which had resisted —not always successfully—the attacks of savage Tartars and heretical Poles, the venerable Icons that had many a time protected the people from danger, the block of masonry from which, on solemn occasions, the Tsar and the Patriarch had addressed the assembled multitude—these, and a hundred other monuments sanctified by tradition, have kept alive in the popular memory some vague remembrance of the olden time, and are still capable of awakening antiquarian patriotism.

The inhabitants, too, have preserved something of the old Muscovite character. Whilst successive sovereigns were striving to make the country a progressive European empire, Moscow remained the home of passive conservatism and an asylum for the discontented, especially for the disappointed aspirants to Imperial favour. Abandoned by the modern Emperors, she could glory in her ancient Tsars. But even the Moscovites were not prepared to accept the Slavophil doctrine in the extreme form which it assumed, and were

not a little perplexed by the eccentricities of those who professed it. Plain, sensible people, though they might be proud of being citizens of the ancient capital, and might thoroughly enjoy a joke at the expense of St. Petersburg, could not understand a little coterie of enthusiasts who sought neither official rank nor lucrative official appointments, who slighted many of the conventionalities of the higher classes to which by birth and education they belonged, who loved to fraternise with the common people, and who occasionally dressed in the national costume which had been discarded by the nobles since the time of Peter the Great.

The Slavophils thus remained merely a small literary party, which probably did not count more than a dozen members, but their influence was out of all proportion to their numbers. They preached successfully the doctrine that the historical development of Russia has been peculiar, that her present social and political organisation is radically different from that of the countries of Western Europe, and that consequently the social and political evils from which she suffers are not to be cured by the remedies which have proved efficacious in France and Germany. These truths, which now appear commonplace, were formerly by no means generally recognised, and the Slavophils deserve credit for directing attention to them. Besides this, they helped to awaken in the upper classes a lively sympathy with the poor, oppressed, and despised peasantry. So long as the Emperor Nicholas lived they had to confine themselves to a purely literary activity; but during the great reforms initiated by his successor, Alexander II., they descended into the arena of practical politics, and played a most useful and honourable part in the emancipation of the serfs. In the new local self-government, too—the Zemstvo and the new municipal institutions—they laboured energetically and to good purpose. Of all this I shall have occasion to speak more fully in future chapters.

But what of their Panslavist aspirations? By their theory they were constrained to pay attention to the Slav race as a whole, but they were more Russian than Slav, and more Moscovite than Russian. The Panslavist element consequently occupied a secondary place in Slavophil

doctrine. Though they did much to stimulate popular sympathy with the Southern Slavs, and always cherished the hope that the Serbs, Bulgarians, and cognate Slav nationalities would one day throw off the bondage of the German and the Turk, they never proposed any elaborate project for the solution of the Eastern Question. So far as I was able to gather from their conversation, they seemed to favour the idea of a grand Slavonic Confederation, in which the hegemony would, of course, belong to Russia. In ordinary times the only steps which they took for the realisation of this idea consisted in contributing money for schools and churches among the Slav population of Austria and Turkey, and in educating young Bulgarians in Russia. During the Cretan insurrection they sympathised warmly with the insurgents as co-religionists, but afterwards—especially during the crisis of the Eastern Question which culminated in the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin (1878)—their Hellenic sympathies cooled, because the Greeks showed that they had political aspirations of their own, inconsistent with the designs of Russia, and that they were likely to be the rivals rather than the allies of the Slavs in the struggle for the Sick Man's inheritance.

Since the time when I was living in Moscow in constant intercourse with the leading Slavophils some five-and-thirty years have passed, and of those with whom I spent so many pleasant evenings, discussing the past history and future destinies of the Slav races, not one remains alive. All the great prophets of the old Slavophil doctrine—Yuri Samárin, Prince Tcherkaski, Ivan Aksákov, Koshelév—have departed without leaving behind them any genuine disciples. The present generation of Moscovite *frondeurs*, who continue to rail against Western Europe and the pedantic officialism of St. Petersburg, are of a more modern and less academic type. Their philippics are directed not against Peter the Great and his reforms, but rather against recent Ministers of Foreign Affairs, who are thought to have shown themselves too subservient to foreign Powers, and against Count Witte, who, as Minister of Finance, "favoured the introduction of foreign capital and enterprise, and sacrificed to unhealthy industrial development the interests of the

agricultural classes." These laments and diatribes find free expression in private conversation and in the Press, but they do not influence very deeply the policy of the Government or the natural course of events; for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to cultivate friendly relations with the Cabinets of the West, and Moscow is rapidly becoming, by the force of economic conditions, the great industrial and commercial centre of the Empire.

Perhaps I ought to say here a few words about a new kind of Slavophilism, which has its headquarters in St. Petersburg and differs somewhat from its Moscovite predecessor. Unlike my old reactionary friends who held that the greatness of Russia could be developed only on the basis of Autocracy and Eastern Orthodoxy, the Slavophils of this new school declare that their doctrines are quite consistent with Liberal, Constitutional principles and with religious freedom in the widest sense of the term. In foreign policy they disclaim all territorial conquests, but they maintain, like their predecessors, that Russia must exercise a certain predominance in the Slav world, and must resist strenuously any extension of German influence in the Balkan Peninsula. In accordance with this principle they protested vigorously against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in 1908, and they thereby attracted for a time a good deal of public attention; but as the Cabinet of Vienna would not yield to mere diplomatic pressure, and Russia was not prepared to appeal to arms, their protests led to no practical result, and they retired into the political background. There is no doubt, however, that we shall hear more about them in the next crisis of the Eastern Question.

Moscow may well pride herself on being, in a certain sense, the capital of Russia, but the administrative and bureaucratic centre of the Empire—if anything on the frontier of a country can be called its centre—has long been, and is likely to remain, Peter's stately city at the mouth of the Neva, to which I now invite the reader to accompany me.

CHAPTER XXVI

ST. PETERSBURG AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

FROM whatever side the traveller approaches St. Petersburg, unless he goes thither by sea, he must traverse several hundred miles of forest and morass, presenting few traces of human habitation or agriculture. This fact adds powerfully to the first impression which the city makes on his mind. In the midst of a waste howling wilderness, he suddenly comes on a magnificent artificial oasis.

Of all the great European cities, the one that most resembles the capital of the Tsars is Berlin. Both are built on perfectly level ground; both have wide, regularly arranged streets; in both there is a general look of stiffness and symmetry which suggests military discipline and German bureaucracy. But there is at least one profound difference. Though Berlin is said by geographers to be built on the Spree, we might live a long time in the city without noticing the sluggish little stream on which the name of a river has been undeservedly conferred. St. Petersburg, on the contrary, is built on a magnificent river, which forms the main feature of the place. By its breadth, and by the enormous volume of its clear, blue, cold water —somewhat polluted of late by manufacturing industry— the Neva is certainly one of the noblest rivers of Europe. A few miles before reaching the Gulf of Finland it breaks up into several streams and forms a delta. It is here that St. Petersburg stands.

Like the river, everything in St. Petersburg is on a colossal scale. The streets, the squares, the palaces, the public buildings, the churches, whatever may be their defects, have at least the attribute of greatness, and seem to have been designed for the countless generations to come, rather than for the practical wants of the present inhabitants. In this respect the city well represents the Empire of which

it is the capital. Even the private houses are built in enormous blocks and divided into many separate apartments. Those built for the working classes sometimes contain, I am assured, more than a thousand inhabitants. How many cubic feet of air is allowed to each person I do not know; not so many, I fear, as is recommended by the most advanced sanitary authorities.

For a detailed description of the city I must refer the reader to the guide-books. Among its numerous monuments, of which the Russians are justly proud, I confess that the one which interested me most was neither St. Isaac's Cathedral, with its majestic gilded dome, its colossal monolithic columns of red granite, and its gaudy interior; nor the Hermitage, with its magnificent collection of Dutch pictures; nor the gloomy, frowning fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, containing the tombs of the Emperors. These and other "sights" may deserve all the praise which enthusiastic tourists have lavished upon them, but what made a far deeper impression on me was the little wooden house in which Peter the Great lived whilst his future capital was being built. In its style and arrangement it looks more like the hut of a navvy than the residence of a Tsar, but it was quite in keeping with the character of the illustrious man who occupied it. Peter could and did occasionally work like a navvy without feeling that his Imperial dignity was thereby impaired. When he determined to build a new capital on a Finnish marsh, inhabited chiefly by wildfowl, he did not content himself with exercising his autocratic power in a comfortable arm-chair. Like the old Greek gods, he went down from his Olympus, and took his place in the ranks of ordinary mortals, superintending the work with his own eyes, and taking part in it with his own hands. If he was as arbitrary and oppressive as any of the pyramid-building Pharaohs, he could at least say in self-justification that he did not spare himself any more than his people, but exposed himself freely to the discomforts and dangers under which thousands of his fellow-labourers succumbed.

In reading the account of Peter's life, written in part by his own pen, we can easily understand how the piously Conservative section of his subjects failed to recognise in

him the legitimate successor of the orthodox Tsars. The old Tsars had been men of grave, pompous demeanour, deeply imbued with the consciousness of their semi-religious dignity. Living habitually in Moscow or its immediate neighbourhood, they spent their time in attending long religious services, in consulting with their *Boyárs*, in being present at ceremonious hunting-parties, in visiting the monasteries, and in holding edifying conversations with ecclesiastical dignitaries or revered ascetics. If they undertook a journey, it was probably to make a pilgrimage to some holy shrine; and, whether in Moscow or elsewhere, they were always protected from contact with ordinary humanity by a formidable barricade of Court ceremonial. In short, they combined the characters of a Christian monk and of an Oriental potentate.

Peter was a man of an entirely different type, and played in the calm, dignified, orthodox ceremonious world of Moscow the part of the bull in the china-shop, outraging ruthlessly and wantonly all the time-honoured traditional conceptions of propriety and etiquette. Utterly regardless of public opinion and popular prejudices, he swept away the old formalities, avoided ceremonies of all kinds, scoffed at ancient usage, preferred foreign secular books to edifying conversations, chose profane heretics as his boon companions, travelled in foreign countries, dressed in heretical costume, defaced the image of God and put his soul in jeopardy by shaving off his beard, compelled his nobles to dress and shave like himself, rushed about the Empire as if goaded on by the demon of unrest, employed his sacred hands in carpentering and other menial occupations, took part openly in the uproarious orgies of his foreign soldiery, and, in short, did everything that "the Lord's anointed" might reasonably be expected not to do. No wonder the Moscovites were scandalised by his conduct, and that some of them suspected he was not the Tsar at all, but Antichrist in disguise. And no wonder he felt the atmosphere of Moscow oppressive, and preferred living in the new capital which he had himself created.

His avowed object in building St. Petersburg was to have "a window by which the Russians might look into

civilised Europe"; and well has the city fulfilled its purpose. From its foundation may be dated the European period of Russian history. Before Peter's time Russia belonged to Asia rather than to Europe, and was doubtless regarded by Englishmen and Frenchmen pretty much as we nowadays regard Bokhara or Kashgar; since that time she has formed an integral part of the European political system, and her intellectual history has been a reflection of the intellectual history of Western Europe, modified and coloured by national character and by peculiar local conditions.

When we speak of the intellectual history of a nation we generally mean in reality the intellectual history of the progressive upper classes. With regard to Russia, more perhaps than with regard to any other country, this distinction must always carefully be borne in mind. Peter succeeded in forcing European civilisation on the nobles, but the people remained unaffected. The nation was, as it were, cleft in two, and with each succeeding generation the cleft widened. Whilst the masses clung obstinately to their time-honoured customs and beliefs, the nobles came to look on the objects of popular veneration as the relics of a barbarous past, of which a civilised nation ought to be ashamed.

The intellectual movement inaugurated by Peter had a purely practical character. He was himself a thorough utilitarian, and perceived clearly that what his people needed was not theological or philosophical enlightenment, but plain practical knowledge suitable for the requirements of every-day life. He wanted neither theologians nor philosophers, but military and naval officers, administrators, artisans, miners, manufacturers, and merchants, and for this purpose he introduced secular technical education. For the young generation primary schools were founded, and for more advanced pupils the best foreign works on fortification, architecture, navigation, metallurgy, engineering and cognate subjects, were translated into the native tongue. Scientific men and cunning artificers were brought into the country, and the young Russians were sent abroad to learn foreign languages and the useful arts. In a word, everything was done that seemed likely to raise the Russians to

the level of material well-being already attained by the more advanced nations.

We have here an important peculiarity in the intellectual development of Russia. In Western Europe the modern scientific spirit, being the natural offspring of numerous concomitant historical causes, was born in the natural way, and society had, consequently, before giving birth to it, to endure the pains of pregnancy and the throes of prolonged labour. In Russia, on the contrary, this spirit appeared suddenly as an adult foreigner adopted by a despotic pater-familias. Thus Russia made the transition from mediæval to modern times without any violent struggle between the old and the new conceptions, such as had taken place in the West. The Church, effectually restrained from all active opposition by the Imperial power, preserved unmodified her ancient beliefs; whilst the nobles, casting their traditional conceptions and beliefs to the winds, marched forward unfettered on that path which their fathers and grandfathers had regarded as the direct road to perdition.

During the first part of Peter's reign Russia was not subjected to the exclusive influence of any one particular country. Thoroughly cosmopolitan in his sympathies, the great reformer, like the modern Japanese, was ready to borrow from any foreign nation—German, Dutch, Danish, or French—whatever seemed to him to suit his purpose. But soon the geographical proximity to Germany, the annexation of the Baltic Provinces in which the civilisation was German, and intermarriages between the Imperial family and various German dynasties, gave to German influence a decided preponderance. When the Empress Anne, Peter's niece, who had been Duchess of Courland, entrusted the whole administration of the country to her favourite Biron, the German influence became almost exclusive, and the Court, the official world, and the schools were Germanised.

The harsh, cruel, tyrannical rule of Biron produced a strong reaction, ending in a revolution, which raised to the throne the Princess Elizabeth, Peter's unmarried daughter, who had lived in retirement and neglect during the German regime. She was expected to rid the country of foreigners,

and she did what she could to fulfil the expectations that were entertained of her. With loud protestations of patriotic feelings, she removed the Germans from all important posts, demanded that in future the members of the Academy should be chosen from among born Russians, and gave orders that the Russian youth should be carefully prepared for all kinds of official activity.

This attempt to throw off the German bondage did not lead to intellectual independence. During Peter's violent reforms Russia had ruthlessly thrown away her own historic past with whatever germs it contained, and now she possessed none of the elements of a genuine national culture. She was in the position of a fugitive who has escaped from slavery, and, finding himself in danger of starvation, looks about for a new master. The upper classes, who had acquired a taste for foreign civilisation, no sooner threw off everything German than they sought some other civilisation to put in its place. And they could not long hesitate in making a choice, for at that time all who thought of culture and refinement turned their eyes to Paris and Versailles. All that was most brilliant and refined was to be found at the Court of the French kings, under whose patronage the art and literature of the Renaissance had attained their highest development. Even Germany, which had resisted the ambitious designs of Louis XIV., imitated the manners of his Court. Every petty German potentate strove to ape the pomp and dignity of the Grand Monarque; and the courtiers, affecting to look on everything German as rude and barbarous, adopted French fashions, and spoke a hybrid jargon which they considered much more elegant than the plain mother tongue. In a word, Gallomania had become the prevailing social epidemic of the time, and it could not fail to attack and metamorphose such a class as the Russian Noblesse, which possessed few stubborn deep-rooted national convictions.

At first the French influence was manifested chiefly in external forms—that is to say, in dress, manners, language, and upholstery—but gradually, and very rapidly after the accession of Catherine II., the friend of Voltaire and the Encyclopédistes, it sank deeper. Every noble who had

pretensions to being "civilised" learned to speak French fluently, and gained some superficial acquaintance with French literature. The tragedies of Corneille and Racine and the comedies of Molière were played regularly at the Court theatre in presence of the Empress, and awakened a real or affected enthusiasm among the audience. For those who preferred reading in their native language, numerous translations were published, a simple list of which would fill several pages. Among them we find not only Voltaire, Rousseau, Lesage, Marmontel, and other favourite French authors, but also all the masterpieces of European literature, ancient and modern, which at that time enjoyed a high reputation in the French literary world—Homer and Demosthenes, Cicero and Virgil, Ariosto and Camoens, Milton and Locke, Sterne and Fielding.

It is related of Byron that he never wrote a description whilst the scene was actually before him; and this fact points to an important psychological principle. The human mind, so long as it is compelled to strain the receptive faculties, cannot engage in that "poetic" activity—to use the term in its Greek sense—which is commonly called "original creation." And as with individuals, so with nations. By accepting in a lump a foreign culture a nation inevitably condemns itself for a time to intellectual sterility. So long as it is occupied in receiving and assimilating a flood of new ideas, unfamiliar conceptions, and foreign modes of thought, it will produce nothing original, and the result of its highest efforts will be merely successful imitation. We need not be surprised therefore to find that the Russians, in becoming acquainted with foreign literature, became imitators and plagiarists. In this kind of work their natural pliancy of mind and powerful histrionic talent made them wonderfully successful. Odes, pseudo-classical tragedies, satirical comedies, epic poems, elegies, and all the other recognised forms of poetical composition, appeared in great profusion, and many of the writers acquired a remarkable command over their native language, which had hitherto been regarded as uncouth and barbarous. But in all this mass of imitative literature, which has since fallen into well-merited oblivion, there are very few traces of genuine

originality. To obtain the title of the Russian Racine, the Russian Lafontaine, the Russian Pindar, or the Russian Homer, was at that time the highest aim of Russian literary ambition.

Together with the fashionable literature the Russian educated classes adopted something of the fashionable philosophy. They were peculiarly unfitted to resist that hurricane of "enlightenment" which swept over Europe during the latter half of the eighteenth century, first breaking or uprooting the received philosophical systems, theological conceptions, and scientific theories, and then shaking to their foundations the existing political and social institutions. The Russian Noblesse had neither the traditional conservative spirit nor the firm, well-reasoned, logical beliefs which in England and Germany formed a powerful barrier against the spread of French influence. They had been too recently metamorphosed, and were too eager to acquire a foreign civilisation, to have even the germs of a conservative spirit. The rapidity and violence with which Peter's reforms had been effected, together with the peculiar spirit of Greek Orthodoxy and the low intellectual level of the clergy, had prevented theology from associating itself with the new order of things. The upper classes had become estranged from the beliefs of their forefathers without acquiring other beliefs to supply the place of those which had been lost. The old religious conceptions were inseparably interwoven with what was recognised as antiquated and barbarous, whilst the new philosophical ideas were associated with all that was modern and civilised. Besides this, the sovereign, Catherine II., who enjoyed the unbounded admiration of the upper classes, openly professed allegiance to the new philosophy, and sought the advice and friendship of its high priests. If we bear in mind these facts we shall not be surprised to find among the Russian nobles of that time a considerable number of so-called "Voltaireans" and numerous unquestioning believers in the infallibility of the Encyclopédie. What is a little more surprising is, that the new philosophy sometimes found its way into the ecclesiastical seminaries. The famous Speranski relates that in the seminary of St. Petersburg, one of his professors, when not in a state of

intoxication, was in the habit of preaching the doctrines of Voltaire and Diderot!

The rise of the sentimental school in Western Europe produced an important change in Russian literature, by undermining the inordinate admiration for the French pseudo-classical school. Florian, Richardson, Sterne, Rousseau, and Bernardin de St. Pierre found first translators, and then imitators, and soon the loud-sounding declamation and wordy ecstatic despair of the stage heroes were drowned in the deep-drawn sighs and plaintive wailings of amorous swains and peasant maids forsaken. The mania seems to have been in Russia even more severe than in the countries where it originated. Full-grown, bearded men wept because they had not been born in peaceful primitive times, "when all men were shepherds and brothers." Hundreds of sighing youths and maidens visited the scenes described by the sentimental writers, and wandered by the rivers and ponds in which despairing heroines had drowned themselves. People talked, wrote, and meditated about "the sympathy of hearts created for each other," "the soft communion of sympathetic souls," and much more of the same kind. Sentimental journeys became a favourite amusement, and formed the subject of very popular books, containing maudlin absurdities likely to produce nowadays mirth rather than tears. One traveller, for instance, throws himself on his knees before an old oak and makes a speech to it; another weeps daily on the grave of a favourite dog, and constantly longs to marry a peasant girl; a third talks love to the moon, sends kisses to the stars, and wishes to press the heavenly orbs to his bosom! For a time the public would read nothing but absurd productions of this sort, and Karamzín, the great literary authority of the time, expressly declared that the true function of Art was "to disseminate agreeable impressions in the region of the sentimental."

The love of French philosophy vanished as suddenly as the inordinate admiration of the French pseudo-classical literature. When the great Revolution broke out in Paris, the fashionable philosophic literature in St. Petersburg disappeared. Men who talked about political freedom and the rights of man, without thinking for a moment of limiting

the Autocratic Power or of emancipating their serfs, were naturally surprised and frightened on discovering what the liberal principles could effect when applied to real life. Horrified by the awful scenes of the Terror, they hastened to divest themselves of the principles which led to such results, and sank into a kind of optimistic conservatism that harmonised well with the virtuous sentimentalism in vogue. In this the Empress herself gave the example. The Imperial disciple and friend of the Encyclopédistes became in the last years of her reign a decided *réactionnaire*.

During the Napoleonic wars, when the patriotic feelings were excited, there was a violent hostility to foreign intellectual influence; and feeble intermittent attempts were made to throw off the intellectual bondage. The invasion of the country in 1812 by the Grande Armée, and the burning of Moscow, added abundant fuel to this patriotic fire. For some time anyone who ventured to express even a moderate admiration for French culture incurred the risk of being stigmatised as a traitor to his country and a renegade to the national faith. But this patriotic fanaticism soon evaporated, and the exaggerations of the ultra-national party became the object of satire and parody. When the political danger was past, and people resumed their ordinary occupations, those who loved foreign literature returned to their old favourites—or, as the ultra-patriots called it, to their "wallowing in the mire"—simply because the native literature did not supply them with what they desired. "We are quite ready," they said to their upbraiders, "to admire your great works as soon as they appear, but in the meantime please allow us to enjoy what we possess." Thus in the last years of the reign of Alexander I. the patriotic opposition to West European literature gradually ceased, and a new period of unrestricted intellectual importation began.

The intellectual merchandise now brought into the country was very different from that which had been imported in the time of Catherine. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic domination, the patriotic wars, the restoration of the Bourbons, and the other great events of that memorable epoch, had in the interval produced profound changes in the intellectual as well as the political condition of Western

Europe. During the Napoleonic wars Russia had become closely associated with Germany; and now the peculiar intellectual fermentation which was going on among the German educated classes was reflected in the society of St. Petersburg. It did not appear, indeed, in the printed literature, for the Press censure had been recently organised on the principles laid down by Metternich, but it was none the less violent on that account. Whilst the periodicals were filled with commonplace meditations on youth, spring, the love of Art, and similar innocent topics, the young generation was discussing in the salons all the burning questions which Metternich and his adherents were endeavouring to extinguish.

These discussions, if discussions they might be called, were not of a very serious kind. In true dilettante style the fashionable young philosophers culled from the newest books the newest thoughts and theories, and retailed them in the salon or the ball-room. And they were always sure to find attentive listeners. The more astounding the idea or dogma, the more likely was it to be favourably received. No matter whether it came from the Rationalists, the Mystics, the Freemasons, or the Methodists, it was certain to find favour, provided it was novel and presented in an elegant form. The eclectic minds of that curious time could derive equal satisfaction from the brilliant discourses of the reactionary jesuitical De Maistre, the revolutionary odes of Pushkin, and the mysticism of Frau von Krüdener. For the majority the vague theosophic doctrines and the projects for a spiritual union of governments and peoples had perhaps the greatest charm, being specially commended by the fact that they enjoyed the protection and sympathy of the Emperor. Pious souls discovered in the mystical lucubrations of Jung-Stilling and Baader the final solution of all existing difficulties—political, social, and philosophical. Men of less dreamy temperament put their faith in political economy and constitutional theories, and sought a foundation for their favourite schemes in the past history of the country and in the supposed fundamental peculiarities of the national character. Like the young German democrats, who were then talking enthusiastically about Teutons, Cheruskers, Skalds, the

shade of Arminius, and the heroes of the Niebelungen, these young Russian savants recognised in early Russian history —when reconstructed according to their own fancy—lofty political ideals, and dreamed, in their new-born enthusiasm, of resuscitating the ancient institutions in all their pristine imaginary splendour.

Each age has its peculiar social and political panaceas. One generation puts its trust in religion, another in philanthropy, a third in written constitutions, a fourth in universal suffrage, a fifth in popular education. In the Epoch of the Restoration, as it is called, the favourite panacea all over the Continent was secret political association. Very soon after the overthrow of Napoleon, the peoples who had risen in arms to obtain political independence discovered that they had merely changed masters. The Princes reconstructed Europe according to their own convenience, without paying much attention to patriotic aspirations, and forgot their promises of liberal institutions as soon as they were again firmly seated on their thrones. This was naturally for many a bitter deception. The young generation, excluded from all share in political life and gagged by the stringent police supervision, sought to realise its political aspirations by means of secret societies, resembling more or less the masonic brotherhoods. There were the Burschenschaften in Germany; the Union, and the "Aide toi et le ciel t'aidera," in France; the Order of the Hammer in Spain; the Carbonari in Italy; and the Hetairai in Greece. In Russia the young nobles followed the prevailing fashion. Secret societies were formed, and in December, 1825, an attempt was made to raise a military insurrection in St. Petersburg, for the purpose of deposing the Imperial family and proclaiming a republic; but the attempt failed, and the vague Utopian dreams of the romantic would-be reformers were swept away by grape-shot.

This "December catastrophe," still vividly remembered, was for the society of St. Petersburg like the giving way of the floor in a crowded ball-room. But a moment before, all had been animated, careless, and happy; now consternation was depicted on every face. The salons that but yesterday had been ringing with lively discussions on morals, æsthetics,

politics, and theology, were now silent and deserted. Many of those who had been wont to lead the *causeries* had been removed to the cells of the fortress, and those who had not been arrested trembled for themselves or their friends; for nearly all had of late dabbled more or less in the theory and practice of revolution. The announcment that five of the conspirators had been condemned to the gallows and the others sentenced to transportation did not tend to calm the consternation. Society was like a discomfited child who amidst the delight and excitement of letting off fireworks has had his fingers severely burnt.

The sentimental, wavering Alexander I. had been succeeded by his stern, energetic brother Nicholas, and the command went forth that there should be no more fireworks, no more dilettante philosophising or political aspirations. There was, however, little need for such an order. Society had been, for the moment at least, effectually cured of all tendencies to political dreaming. It had discovered, to its astonishment and dismay, that these new ideas, which were to bring temporal salvation to humanity, and to make all men happy, virtuous, refined, and poetical, led in reality to exile and the scaffold! The pleasant dream was at an end, and the fashionable world, giving up its former habits, took to harmless occupations—card-playing, dissipation, and the reading of French light literature. "The French quadrille," as a writer of the time tersely expresses it, "has taken the place of Adam Smith."

When the storm had passed, the life of the salons began anew, but it was very different from what it had been. There was no longer any talk about political economy, theology, popular education, administrative abuses, social and political reforms. Everything that had any relation to politics in the wider sense of the term was by tacit consent avoided. Discussions there were as of old, but they were now confined to literary topics, theories of art, and similar innocent subjects.

This indifference or positive repugnance to philosophy and political science, strengthened and prolonged by the repressive system of administration adopted by Nicholas, was of course fatal to the many-sided intellectual activity

which had flourished during the preceding reign, but it was by no means unfavourable to the cultivation of imaginative literature. On the contrary, by excluding those practical interests which tend to disturb artistic production and to engross the attention of the public, it fostered what was called in the phraseology of that time "the pure-hearted worship of the Muses." We need not, therefore, be surprised to find that the reign of Nicholas, which is commonly and not unjustly described as an epoch of social and intellectual stagnation, may be called in a certain sense the Golden Age of Russian literature.

Already in the preceding reign the struggle between the Classical and the Romantic school—between the adherents of traditional æsthetic principles and the partisans of untrammelled poetic inspiration—which was being carried on in Western Europe, was reflected in Russia. A group of young men belonging to the aristocratic society of St. Petersburg embraced with enthusiasm the new doctrines, and declared war against "classicism," under which term they understood all that was antiquated, dry, and pedantic. Discarding the stately, lumbering, unwieldy periods which had hitherto been in fashion, they wrote a light, elastic, vigorous style, and formed a literary society for the express purpose of ridiculing the most approved classical writers. The new principles found many adherents, and the new style many admirers, but this only intensified the hostility of the literary Conservatives. The staid, respectable leaders of the old school, who had all their lives kept the fear of Boileau before their eyes and considered his precepts as the infallible utterances of æsthetic wisdom, thundered against the impious innovations as unmistakable symptoms of literary decline and moral degeneracy—representing the boisterous young iconoclasts as dissipated Don Juans and dangerous freethinkers.

Thus for some time in Russia, as in Western Europe, "a terrible war raged on Parnassus." At first the Government frowned at the innovators, on account of certain revolutionary odes which one of their number had written; but when the Romantic Muse, having turned away from the present as essentially prosaic, went back into the distant

past and soared into the region of sublime abstractions, the most keen-eyed Press Censors found no reason to condemn her worship, and the authorities placed almost no restrictions on free poetic inspiration. Romantic poetry acquired the protection of the Government and the patronage of the Court, and the names of Zhukovski, Pushkin, and Lermontov—the three chief representatives of the Russian Romantic school—became household words in all ranks of the educated classes.

These three great luminaries of the literary world were of course attended by a host of satellites of various magnitudes, who did all in their power to refute the Romantic principles by *reductiones ad absurdum*. Endowed for the most part with considerable facility of composition, the poetasters poured forth their feelings with torrential recklessness, demanding freedom for their inspiration, and cursing the age that fettered them with its prosaic cares, its cold reason, and its dry science. At the same time the dramatists and novelists created heroes of immaculate character and angelic purity, endowed with all the cardinal virtues in the superlative degree; and, as a contrast to these, terrible Satanic personages with savage passions, gleaming daggers, deadly poisons, and all manner of aimless melodramatic villainy. These stilted productions, interspersed with light satirical essays, historical sketches, literary criticism, and amusing anecdotes, formed the contents of the periodical literature, and completely satisfied the wants of the reading public. Almost no one at that time took any interest in public affairs or foreign politics. The acts of the Government which were watched most attentively were the promotions in the service and the conferring of decorations. The publication of a new tale by Zagóskin or Marlínski—two writers now wellnigh forgotten—seemed of much greater importance than any amount of legislation, and such events as the French Revolution of 1830 paled before the publication of a new poem by Pushkin.

The Transcendental philosophy, which in Germany went hand in hand with the Romantic literature, found likewise a faint reflection in Russia. A number of young professors and students in Moscow, who had become ardent admirers

of German literature, passed from the works of Schiller, Goethe, and Hoffmann to the writings of Schelling and Hegel. Trained in the Romantic school, these young philosophers found at first a special charm in Schelling's mystical system, teeming with hazy poetical metaphors, and presenting a misty grandiose picture of the universe; but gradually they felt the want of some logical basis for their speculations, and Hegel became their favourite. Gallantly they struggled with the uncouth terminology and epigrammatic paradoxes of the great thinker, and strove to force their way through the intricate mazes of his logical formulæ. With the ardour of neophytes they looked at every phenomenon—even the most trivial incident of common life—from the philosophical point of view, talked day and night about principles, ideas, subjectivity, *Weltauffassung*, and similar abstract entities, and habitually attacked the "hydra of unphilosophy" by analysing the phenomena presented and relegating the ingredient elements to the recognised categories. In ordinary life they were men of quiet, grave, contemplative demeanour, but their faces could flush and their blood boil when they discussed the all-important question whether it is possible to pass logically from Pure Being through Nonentity to the conception of Development and Definite Existence!

We know how in Western Europe Romanticism and Transcendentalism, in their various forms, sank into oblivion, and were replaced by a literature which had a closer connection with ordinary prosaic wants and plain everyday life. The educated public became weary of the Romantic writers, who were always "sighing like a furnace," delighting in solitude, cold eternity, and moonshine, deluging the world with their heart-gushings, and calling on the heavens and the earth to stand aghast at their Promethean agonising or their Wertherean despair. Healthy human nature revolted against the poetical enthusiasts, who had lost the faculty of seeing things in their natural light, and who constantly indulged in that morbid self-analysis which is fatal to genuine feeling and vigorous action. And in this healthy reaction the philosophers fared no better than the poets, with whom, indeed, they had much in common. Shutting their eyes to

the visible world around them, they had busied themselves with burrowing in the mysterious depths of Absolute Being, grappling with the *ego* and the *non-ego*, constructing the great world, visible and invisible, out of their own puny internal self-consciousness, endeavouring to appropriate all departments of human thought, and imparting to every subject they touched the dryness and rigidity of an algebraical formula. Gradually men with real human sympathies began to perceive that from all this philosophical turmoil little real advantage was to be derived. It became only too evident that the philosophers were perfectly reconciled with all the evil in the world, provided it did not contradict their theories; that they were men of the same type as the physician in Molière's comedy, whose chief care was that his patients should die *selon les ordonnances de la médecine*.

In Russia the reaction first appeared in the æsthetic literature. Its first influential representative was Gógol (b. 1808, d. 1852), who may be called, in a certain sense, the Russian Dickens. A minute comparison of those two great humourists would perhaps show as many points of contrast as of similarity, but there is a strong superficial resemblance between them. They both possessed an inexhaustible supply of broad humour and an imagination of singular vividness. Both had the power of seeing the ridiculous side of common things, and the talent of producing caricatures that had a wonderful semblance of reality. A little calm reflection would suffice to show that the characters presented are for the most part psychological impossibilities; but on first making their acquaintance we are so struck with one or two life-like characteristics and various little details dexterously introduced, and at the same time we are so carried away by the overflowing fun of the narrative, that we have neither time nor inclination to use our critical faculties. In a very short time Gógol's fame spread throughout the length and breadth of the Empire, and many of his characters became as familiar to his countrymen as Sam Weller and Mrs. Gamp were to Englishmen. His descriptions were so graphic—so like the world which everybody knew! The characters seemed to be old acquaint-

ances hit off to the life; and readers revelled in that peculiar pleasure which most of us derive from seeing our friends successfully mimicked. Even the Iron Tsar could not resist the fun and humour of "The Inspector" (*Revizór*), and not only laughed heartily, but also protected the author against the tyranny of the literary censors, who considered that the piece was not written in a sufficiently "well-intentioned" tone. In a word, the reading public laughed as it had never laughed before, and this wholesome, genuine merriment did much to destroy the morbid appetite for Byronic heroes and Romantic affectation.

The Romantic Muse did not at once abdicate, but with the spread of Gógol's popularity her reign was practically at an end. In vain some of the conservative critics decried the new favourite as talentless, prosaic, and vulgar. The public were not to be robbed of their amusement for the sake of any abstract æsthetic considerations; and young authors, taking Gógol for their model, chose their subjects from real life, and endeavoured to delineate with minute truthfulness.

This new intellectual movement was at first purely literary, and affected merely the manner of writing novels, tales, and poems. The critics who had previously demanded beauty of form and elegance of expression now demanded accuracy of description, condemned the aspirations towards so-called high art, and praised loudly those who produced the best literary photographs. But authors and critics did not long remain on this purely æsthetic standpoint. The authors, in describing reality, began to indicate moral approval and condemnation, and the critics began to pass from the criticism of the representations to the criticism of the realities represented. A poem or a tale was often used as a peg on which to hang a moral lecture, and the fictitious characters were soundly rated for their sins of omission and commission. Much was said about the defence of the oppressed, female emancipation, honour, and humanitarianism; and ridicule was unsparingly launched against all forms of ignorance, apathy, and the spirit of routine. The ordinary refrain was that the public ought now to discard what was formerly regarded as poetical and sublime, and to

occupy itself with practical concerns—with the real wants of social life.

The literary movement was thus becoming a movement in favour of social and political reform when it was suddenly arrested by political events in the West. The February Revolution in Paris, and the political fermentation which appeared during 1848-49 in almost every country of Europe, alarmed the Emperor Nicholas and his counsellors. A Russian army was sent into Austria to suppress the Hungarian insurrection and save the Habsburg dynasty, and the most stringent measures were taken to prevent disorders at home. One of the first precautions for the preservation of domestic tranquillity was to muzzle the Press more firmly than before, and to silence the aspirations towards reform and progress; thenceforth nothing could be printed which was not in strict accordance with the ultra-patriotic theory of Russian history, as expressed by a leading official personage: "The past has been admirable, the present is more than magnificent, and the future will surpass all that the human imagination can conceive!" The alarm caused by the revolutionary disorders spread to the non-official world, and gave rise to much patriotic self-congratulation. "The nations of the West," it was said, "envy us, and if they knew us better—if they could see how happy and prosperous we are—they would envy us still more. We ought not, however, to withdraw from Europe our solicitude; its hostility should not deprive us of our high mission of saving order and restoring rest to the nations; we ought to teach them to obey authority as we do. It is for us to introduce the saving principle of order into a world that has fallen a prey to anarchy. Russia ought not to abandon that mission which has been entrusted to her by the heavenly and by the earthly Tsar." *

Men who saw in the significant political eruption of 1848 nothing but an outburst of meaningless, aimless anarchy, and who believed that their country was destined to restore order throughout the civilised world, had of course little time or inclination to think of putting their own house in

* These words were written by Tchaadáév, who, a few years before, had vigorously attacked the Slavophils for enouncing similar views.

order. No one now spoke of the necessity of social reorganisation; the recently awakened aspirations and expectations seemed to be completely forgotten. The critics returned to their old theory that art and literature should be cultivated for their own sake and not used as a vehicle for the propagation of ideas foreign to their nature. It seemed, in short, as if all the prolific ideas which had for a time occupied the public attention had been merely "writ in water," and had now disappeared without leaving a trace behind them.

In reality the new movement was destined to reappear very soon with tenfold force; but the account of its reappearance and development belong to a future chapter. Meanwhile I may formulate the general conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing pages. Ever since the time of Peter the Great there has been such a close connection between Russia and Western Europe that every intellectual movement which has appeared in France and Germany has been reflected—albeit in an exaggerated, distorted form—in the educated society of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Thus the window which Peter opened in order to enable his subjects to look into Europe has well served its purpose.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE CRIMEAN WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

THE Russians frankly admit that they were beaten in the Crimean War, but they regard the heroic defence of Sebastopol as one of the most glorious events in the military annals of their country. Nor do they altogether regret the result of the struggle. Often in a half-jocular, half-serious tone they say that they had reason to be grateful to the Allies. And there is much truth in this paradoxical statement. The Crimean War inaugurated a new epoch in the national history. It gave the death-blow to the repressive system of the Emperor Nicholas, and produced an intellectual movement and a moral revival which led to gigantic results.

"The affair of December," 1825—I mean the abortive attempt at a military insurrection in St. Petersburg, to which I have alluded in the foregoing chapter—gave the key-note to Nicholas's reign. The armed attempt to overthrow the Imperial power, ending in the execution or exile of many young members of the first families, struck terror into the Noblesse, and prepared the way for a period of repressive police administration. Nicholas had none of the moral limpness and vacillating character of his predecessor. His was one of those simple, vigorous, tenacious, straightforward natures—more frequently to be met with among the Teutonic than among the Slav races—whose conceptions are all founded on a few deep-rooted, semi-instinctive convictions, and who are utterly incapable of accommodating themselves with histrionic cleverness to the changes of external circumstances. From his early youth he had shown a strong liking for military discipline, and a decided repugnance to the humanitarianism and liberal principles then in fashion. With "the rights of man," "the spirit of the age," and similar philosophical abstractions his strong, domineering nature had no sympathy; and for the vague, loud-sounding

phrases of philosophic liberalism he had a most profound contempt. "Attend to your military duties," he was wont to say to his officers before his accession; "don't trouble your heads with philosophy. I cannot bear philosophers!"

The tragic event which formed the prelude to his reign naturally confirmed and fortified his previous convictions. The representatives of liberalism, who could talk so eloquently about duty in the abstract, had, whilst wearing the uniform of the Imperial Guard, openly disobeyed the repeated orders of their superior officers and attempted to shake the allegiance of the troops for the purpose of overthrowing the Imperial power! A man who was at once soldier and autocrat, by nature as well as by position, could of course admit no extenuating circumstances. The incident stereotyped his character for life, and made him the sworn enemy of liberalism and the fanatical defender of autocracy, not only in his own country, but throughout Europe. In European politics he saw two forces struggling for mastery —monarchy and democracy, which were in his opinion identical with order and anarchy; and he was always ready to assist his brother sovereigns in putting down democratic movements. In his own Empire he endeavoured by every means in his power to prevent the introduction of the dangerous ideas. For this purpose a stringent intellectual quarantine was established on the western frontier. All foreign books and newspapers, except those of the most harmless kind, were rigorously excluded. Native writers were placed under strict supervision, and peremptorily silenced as soon as they departed from what was considered a "well-intentioned" tone. The number of university students was diminished, the chairs for political science were suppressed, and the military schools multiplied. Russians were prevented from travelling abroad, and foreigners who visited the country were closely watched by the police. By these and similar measures it was hoped that Russia would be preserved from the dangers of revolutionary agitation.

Nicholas has been called the Don Quixote of Autocracy, and the comparison which the term implies is true in many points. By character and aims he belonged to a time that

had passed away; but failure and mishap could not shake his faith in his ideal, and made no change in his honest, stubborn nature, which was as loyal and chivalresque as that of the ill-fated Knight of La Mancha. In spite of all evidence to the contrary, he believed in the practical omnipotence of autocracy. He imagined that as his authority was theoretically unlimited, so his power could work miracles. By nature and training a soldier, he considered government a slightly modified form of military discipline, and looked on the nation as an army which might be made to perform any intellectual or economic evolutions that he might see fit to command. All social ills seemed to him the consequence of disobedience to his orders, and he knew only one remedy—more discipline. Any expression of doubt as to the wisdom of his policy, or any criticism of existing regulations, he treated as an act of insubordination which a wise sovereign ought not to tolerate. If he never said, "L'État—c'est moi!" it was because he considered the fact so self-evident that it did not need to be stated. Hence, any attack on the administration, even in the person of the most insignificant official, was an attack on himself and on the monarchical principle which he represented. The people must believe—and faith, as we know, comes not by sight—that they lived under the best possible government. To doubt of this was political heresy. An incautious word or a foolish joke against the Government was considered a serious crime, and might be punished by a long exile in some distant and inhospitable part of the Empire. Progress should by all means be made, but it must be made by word of command, and in the way ordered. Private initiative in any form was a thing on no account to be tolerated.

Nicholas never suspected that a ruler, however well-intentioned, energetic, and legally autocratic he may be, can do but little without the co-operation of his people. Experience constantly showed him the fruitlessness of his efforts, but he paid no attention to its teachings. He had formed once for all his theory of government, and for thirty years he acted according to it with all the blindness and obstinacy of a reckless, fanatical doctrinaire. Even at the close of his reign, when the terrible logic of facts had proved

his system to be a mistake—when his armies had been defeated, his best fleet destroyed, his ports blockaded, and his treasury wellnigh emptied—he could not recant. "My successor," he is reported to have said on his death-bed, "may do as he pleases, but I cannot change."

Had Nicholas lived in the old patriarchal times, when kings were the uncontrolled "shepherds of the people," he would perhaps have been an admirable ruler; but in the nineteenth century he was a flagrant anachronism. His system of administration completely broke down. In vain he multiplied formalities and inspectors, and punished severely the few delinquents who happened by some accident to be brought to justice; the officials continued to pilfer, extort, and misgovern in every possible way. Though the country was reduced to what would be called in Europe "a state of siege," the inhabitants might still have said—as they are reported to have declared a thousand years before—"Our land is great and fertile, but there is no order in it."

In a nation accustomed to political life and to a certain amount of self-government, any approach to the system of Nicholas would, of course, have produced widespread dissatisfaction and violent hatred against the ruling power. But in Russia at that time no such feelings were awakened. The educated classes—and a fortiori the uneducated—were profoundly indifferent not only to political questions, but also to ordinary public affairs, whether local or Imperial, and were quite content to leave them in the hands of those who were paid for attending to them. In common with the uneducated peasantry, the nobles had a boundless respect—one might almost say a superstitious reverence—not only for the person, but also for the will of the Tsar, and were ready to show unquestioning obedience to his commands, so long as these did not interfere with their accustomed mode of life. The Tsar desired them not to trouble their heads with political questions, and to leave all public matters to the care of the Administration; and in this respect the Imperial will coincided so well with their personal inclinations that they had no difficulty in complying with it.

When the Tsar ordered those of them who held office to refrain from extortion and peculation, his orders were

not so punctiliously obeyed, but in this disobedience there was no open opposition—no assertion of a right to pilfer and extort. As the disobedience proceeded, not from a feeling of insubordination, but merely from the weakness that official flesh is heir to, it was not regarded as very heinous. In polite society the shortcomings of officials might be mentioned as material for amusing anecdotes, but never as an argument for reform. Advocacy of reform would have been inconsistent with the reputation of being "well-intentioned," which was an indispensable condition for Court favour and promotion in the service. Outside of official duties and the routine of everyday life, the only legitimate subjects of interest were *belles-lettres* and the fine arts. In short, the educated classes in Russia at that time showed a complete indifference to political and social questions, an apathetic acquiescence in the system of administration adopted by the Government, and an unreasoning contentment with the existing state of things.

About the year 1845, when the reaction against Romanticism was awakening in the reading public an interest in the affairs of real life,* the prevalent optimistic apathy was disturbed by the so-called "men with aspirations," a little band of enthusiasts, strongly resembling the youth in Longfellow's poem who carries a banner with the device "Excelsior," and strives ever to climb higher, without having any clear notion of where he is going to, or of what he is to do when he reaches the summit. At first they had little more than a sentimental enthusiasm for the true, the beautiful, and the good, and a certain Platonic love of free institutions, liberty, enlightenment, progress, and everything that was generally comprehended at that period under the term "liberal." Gradually, under the influence of the current French literature, their ideas became a little clearer, and they began to look on reality around them with a critical eye. They could perceive, without much effort, the unrelenting tyranny of the Administration, the notorious venality of the tribunals, the reckless squandering of the public money, the miserable condition of the serfs, the systematic strangulation of all independent opinion or private initiative, and,

* *Vide supra*, pp. 434-35.

above all, the profound apathy of the upper classes, who seemed quite content with things as they were.

With such ugly facts staring them in the face, and with the habit of looking at things from the moral point of view, these men could understand how hollow and false were the soothing or triumphant phrases of official optimism. They did not, indeed, dare to express their indignation publicly, for the authorities would allow no public expression of dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, but they disseminated their ideas among their friends and acquaintances by means of conversation and manuscript literature, and some of them, as university professors and writers in the periodical Press, contrived to awaken in a certain section of the young generation an ardent enthusiasm for enlightenment and progress, and a vague hope that a brighter day was about to dawn.

Not a few sympathised with these new conceptions and aspirations, but the great majority of the nobles regarded them—especially after the French Revolution of 1848—as revolutionary and dangerous. Thus the educated classes became divided into two sections, which have sometimes been called the Liberals and the Conservatives, but which might be more properly designated the men with aspirations and the apathetically contented. These latter doubtless felt occasionally the irksomeness of the existing system, but they had always one consolation: if they were oppressed at home they were feared abroad. The Tsar was at least a thorough soldier, possessing an enormous and well-equipped army, by which he might at any moment impose his will on Europe. Ever since the glorious days of 1812, when Napoleon was forced to make an ignominious retreat from the ruins of Moscow, the belief that the Russian soldiers were superior to all others, and that the Russian army was invincible, had become an article of the popular creed; and the respect which the voice of Nicholas commanded in Western Europe seemed to prove that the fact was admitted by foreign nations. In these and similar considerations the apathetically contented found a justification for their lethargy.

When it became evident, on the eve of the Crimean War, that Russia was about to engage in a trial of

strength with the Western Powers, this optimism became general. "The heavy burdens," it was said, "which the people have had to bear were necessary to make Russia the first military Power in Europe, and now the nation will reap the fruits of its long-suffering and patient resignation. The West will learn that her boasted liberty and liberal institutions are of little service in the hour of danger, and the Russians who admire such institutions will be constrained to admit that a strong, all-directing autocracy is the only means of preserving national greatness." As the patriotic fervour and military enthusiasm increased, nothing was heard but praises of Nicholas and his system. The war was regarded by many as a kind of crusade—even the Emperor spoke about the defence of "the native soil and the holy faith" and the most exaggerated expectations were entertained of its results. The old Eastern Question was at last to be solved in accordance with Russian aspirations, and Nicholas was about to realise Catherine II.'s grand scheme of driving the Turks out of Europe. The date at which the troops would arrive at Constantinople was actively discussed, and a Slavophil poet called on the Emperor to lie down in Constantinople and rise up as Tsar of a Panslavonic Empire. Some enthusiasts even expected the speedy liberation of Jerusalem from the power of the Infidel. To the enemy, who might possibly hinder the accomplishment of these schemes, very little attention was paid. "We have only to throw our hats at them!" (*shápkami zakidáem*) became a favourite expression.

There were, however, a few men in whom the prospect of the coming struggle awoke very different thoughts and feelings. They could not share the sanguine expectations of those who were confident of success. "What preparations have we made," they asked, "for the struggle with civilisation, which now sends its forces against us? With all our vast territory and countless population we are incapable of coping with it. When we talk of the glorious campaigns against Napoleon, we forget that since that time Europe has been steadily advancing on the road of progress while we have been standing still. We march not to victory, but to defeat, and the only grain of consolation which we have is

that Russia will learn by experience a lesson that will be of use to her in the future." *

These prophets of evil found, of course, few disciples, and were generally regarded as unworthy sons of the Fatherland—almost as traitors to their country. But their predictions were confirmed by events. The Allies were victorious in the Crimea, and even the despised Turks made a successful stand on the line of the Danube. In spite of the efforts of the Government to suppress all unpleasant intelligence, it soon became known that the military organisation was little, if at all, better than the civil administration —that the individual bravery of soldiers and officers was neutralised by the incapacity of the generals, the venality of the officials, and the shameless peculation of the commissariat department. The Emperor, it was said, had drilled out of the officers all energy, individuality, and moral force. Almost the only men who showed judgment, decision, and energy were the officers of the Black Sea fleet, which had been less subjected to the prevailing system. As the struggle went on, it became evident how weak the country really was —how deficient in the resources necessary to sustain a prolonged conflict. "Another year of war," writes an eye-witness in 1855, "and the whole of Southern Russia will be ruined." To meet the extraordinary demands on the Treasury, recourse was had to an enormous issue of paper money; but the rapid depreciation of the currency showed that this resource would soon be exhausted. Militia regiments were everywhere raised throughout the country, and many proprietors spent large sums in equipping volunteer corps; but very soon this enthusiasm cooled when it was found that the patriotic efforts enriched the jobbers without inflicting any serious injury on the enemy.

Under the sting of the great national humiliation, the upper classes awoke from their optimistic resignation. They had borne patiently the oppression of a semi-military administration, and for this! The system of Nicholas had been put to a crucial test, and found wanting. The policy which had sacrificed all to increase the military power of the Empire was seen to be a fatal error, and the worthlessness

* These are the words of Granóvski.

of the drill-sergeant regime was proved by bitter experience. Those administrative fetters which had for more than a quarter of a century cramped every spontaneous movement had failed to fulfil even the narrow purpose for which they had been forged. They had, indeed, secured a certain external tranquillity during those troublous times when Europe was convulsed by revolutionary agitation; but this tranquillity was not that of healthy normal action, but of death—and underneath the surface lay secret and rapidly spreading corruption. The army still possessed that dashing gallantry which it had displayed in the campaigns of Suvórov, that dogged, stoical bravery which had checked the advance of Napoleon on the field of Borodino, and that wondrous power of endurance which had often redeemed the negligence of generals and the defects of the commissariat; but the result was now not victory, but defeat. How could this be explained except by the radical defects of that system which had been long practised with such inflexible perseverance? The Government had imagined that it could do everything by its own wisdom and energy, and in reality it had done nothing, or worse than nothing. The higher officers had learned only too well to be mere automatons; the ameliorations in the military organisation, on which Nicholas had always bestowed special attention, were found to exist for the most part only in the official reports; the shameful exploits of the commissariat department were such as to excite the indignation even of those who had long lived in an atmosphere of official jobbery and peculation; and the finances, which people had generally supposed to be in a highly satisfactory condition, had become seriously crippled by the first great national effort.

This deep and widespread dissatisfaction was not allowed to appear in the Press, but it found very free expression in the manuscript literature and in conversation. In almost every house—I mean, of course, among the educated classes —words were spoken which a few months before would have seemed treasonable, if not blasphemous. Philippics and satires in prose and verse were written by the dozen, and circulated in hundreds of copies. A pasquil on the Commander-in-Chief, or a tirade against the Government, was

sure to be eagerly read and warmly approved of. As a specimen of this kind of literature, and an illustration of the public opinion of the time, I may translate here one of those metrical tirades. Though it was never printed, it obtained a wide circulation :—

"'God has placed me over Russia,' said the Tsar to us, 'and you must bow down before me, for my throne is His altar. Trouble not yourselves with public affairs, for I think for you and watch over you every hour. My watchful eye detects internal evils and the machinations of foreign enemies; and I have no need of counsel, for God inspires me with wisdom. Be proud, therefore, of being my slaves, O Russians, and regard my will as your law.'

"We listened to these words with deep reverence, and gave a tacit consent; and what was the result? Under mountains of official papers real interests were forgotten. The letter of the law was observed, but negligence and crime were allowed to go unpunished. While grovelling in the dust before ministers and directors of departments, in the hope of receiving *tchins* and decorations, the officials stole unblushingly; and theft became so common that he who stole the most was the most respected. The merits of officers were decided at reviews; and he who obtained the rank of General was supposed capable of becoming at once an able governor, an excellent engineer, or a most wise senator. Those who were appointed governors were for the most part genuine satraps, the scourges of the provinces entrusted to their care. The other offices were filled up with as little attention to the merits of the candidates. A stable-boy became Press Censor! an Imperial fool became admiral!! Kleinmichel became a count!!! In a word, the country was handed over to the tender mercies of a band of robbers.

"And what did we Russians do all this time?

"We Russians slept! With groans the peasant paid his yearly dues; with groans the proprietor mortgaged the second half of his estate; groaning, we all paid our heavy tribute to the officials. Occasionally, with a grave shaking of the head, we remarked in a whisper that it was a shame and a disgrace—that there was no justice in the courts—that millions were squandered on Imperial tours, kiosks, and

pavilions—that everything was wrong; and then, with an easy conscience, we sat down to our rubber, praised the acting of Rachel, criticised the singing of Frezzolini, bowed low to venal magnates, and squabbled with each other for advancement in the very service which we so severely condemned. If we did not obtain the place we wished we retired to our ancestral estates, where we talked of the crops, fattened in indolence and gluttony, and lived a genuine animal life. If anyone, amidst the general lethargy, suddenly called upon us to rise and fight for the truth and for Russia, how ridiculous did he appear! How cleverly the Pharisaical official ridiculed him, and how quickly the friends of yesterday showed him the cold shoulder! Under the anathema of public opinion, in some distant Siberian mine he recognised what a heinous sin it was to disturb the heavy sleep of apathetic slaves. Soon he was forgotten, or remembered as an unfortunate madman; and the few who said, 'Perhaps after all he was right,' hastened to add, 'but that is none of our business.'

"But amidst all this we had at least one consolation, one thing to be proud of—the might of Russia in the assembly of kings. 'What need we care,' we said, 'for the reproaches of foreign nations? We are stronger than those who reproach us.' And when at great reviews the stately regiments marched past with waving standards, glittering helmets, and sparkling bayonets, when we heard the loud hurrah with which the troops greeted the Emperor, then our hearts swelled with patriotic pride, and we were ready to repeat the words of the poet—

'Strong is our native country, and great the Russian Tsar!'

Then British statesmen, in company with the crowned conspirator of France, and with treacherous Austria, raised Western Europe against us, but we laughed scornfully at the coming storm. 'Let the nations rave,' we said; 'we have no cause to be afraid. The Tsar doubtless foresaw all, and has long since made the necessary preparations.' Boldly we went forth to fight, and confidently awaited the moment of the struggle.

"And lo! after all our boasting we were taken by surprise,

and caught unawares, as by a robber in the dark. The sleep of innate stupidity blinded our Ambassadors, and our Foreign Minister sold us to our enemies.* Where were our millions of soldiers? Where was the well-considered plan of defence? One courier brought the order to advance; another brought the order to retreat; and the army wandered about without definite aim or purpose. With loss and shame we retreated from the forts of Silistria, and the pride of Russia was humbled before the Habsburg eagle. The soldiers fought well, but the parade-admiral (Menshikov) —the amphibious hero of lost battles—did not know the geography of his own country, and sent his troops to certain destruction.

"Awake, O Russia! Devoured by foreign enemies, crushed by slavery, shamefully oppressed by stupid authorities and spies, awaken from your long sleep of ignorance and apathy! You have been long enough held in bondage by the successors of the Mongol Khan. Stand forward calmly before the throne of the despot, and demand from him an account of the national disaster. Say to him boldly that his throne is not the altar of God, and that God did not condemn us to be slaves. Russia entrusted to you, O Tsar, the supreme power, and you were as a God upon earth. And what have you done? Blinded by ignorance and passion, you have lusted after power and have forgotten Russia. You have spent your life in reviewing troops, in modifying uniforms, and in appending your signature to the legislative projects of ignorant charlatans. You created the despicable race of Press Censors, in order to sleep in peace—in order not to know the wants and not to hear the groans of the people—in order not to listen to Truth. You buried Truth, rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, placed a strong guard over it, and said in the pride of your heart: For her there is no resurrection! But the third day has dawned, and Truth has arisen from the dead.

"Stand forward, O Tsar, before the judgment-seat of history and of God! You have mercilessly trampled Truth under foot, you have denied Freedom, you have been the

* Many people at that time imagined that Count Nesselrode, who was then Minister for Foreign Affairs, was a traitor to his adopted country.

slave of your own passions. By your pride and obstinacy you have exhausted Russia and raised the world in arms against us. Bow down before your brethren and humble yourself in the dust! Crave pardon and ask advice! Throw yourself into the arms of the people! There is now no other salvation!"

The innumerable tirades of which the above is a fair specimen were not very remarkable for literary merit or political wisdom. For the most part they were simply bits of bombastic rhetoric couched in doggerel rhyme, and they have consequently been long since consigned to well-merited oblivion—so completely that it is now difficult to obtain copies of them.* They have, however, an historical interest, because they express in a more or less exaggerated form the public opinion and prevalent ideas of the educated classes at that moment. In order to comprehend their real significance, we must remember that the writers and readers were not a band of conspirators, but ordinary, respectable, well-intentioned people, who never for a moment dreamed of embarking in revolutionary designs. It was the same society that had been a few months before so indifferent to all political questions, and even now there was no clear conception as to how the loud-sounding phrases could be translated into action. We can imagine the comical discomfiture of those who read and listened to these appeals, if the "despot" had obeyed their summons, and suddenly appeared before them!

Was the movement, then, merely an outburst of childish petulance? Certainly not. The public were really and seriously convinced that things were all wrong, and they were seriously and enthusiastically desirous that a new and better order of things should be introduced. It must be said to their honour that they did not content themselves with accusing and lampooning the individuals who were supposed to be the chief culprits. On the contrary, they looked reality boldly in the face, made a public confession of their past sins, sought conscientiously the causes which had produced the recent disasters, and endeavoured to find

* I am indebted for the copies which I possess to friends who copied and collected these pamphlets at the time.

means by which such calamities might be prevented in the future. The public feeling and aspirations were not strong enough to conquer the traditional respect for the Imperial will and create an open opposition to the Autocratic Power, but they were strong enough to do great things by aiding the Government, if the Emperor voluntarily undertook a series of radical reforms.

What Nicholas would have done, had he lived, in face of this national awakening, it is difficult to say. He declared, indeed, that he could not change, and we can readily believe that his proud spirit would have scorned to make concessions to the principles which he had always condemned; but he gave decided indications in the last days of his life that his old faith in his system was somewhat shaken, and he did not exhort his son to persevere in the path along which he himself had forced his way with such obstinate consistency. It is useless, however, to speculate on possibilities. Whilst the Government had still to concentrate all its energies on the defence of the country, the Iron Tsar died, and was succeeded by his son, a man of a very different type.

Of a kind-hearted, humane disposition, sincerely desirous of maintaining the national honour, but singularly free from military ambition and imbued with no fanatical belief in the drill-sergeant system of government, Alexander II. was by no means insensible to the spirit of the time. He had, however, none of the sentimental enthusiasm for liberal institutions which had characterised his uncle, Alexander I. On the contrary, he had inherited from his father a strong dislike to sentimentalism and rhetoric of all kinds. This dislike, joined to a goodly portion of sober common sense, a limited confidence in his own judgment, and a consciousness of enormous responsibility, prevented him from being carried away by the prevailing excitement. With all that was generous and humane in the movement he thoroughly sympathised, and he allowed the popular ideas and aspirations to find free utterance; but he did not at once commit himself to any definite policy, and carefully refrained from all exaggerated expressions of reforming zeal.

As soon, however, as peace had been concluded, there were unmistakable symptoms that the rigorously repressive

system of Nicholas was about to be abandoned. In the manifesto announcing the termination of hostilities the Emperor expressed his conviction that *by the combined efforts of the Government and the people,* the public administration would be improved, and that justice and mercy would reign in the courts of law. Apparently as a preparation for this great work, to be undertaken by the Tsar and his people in common, the ministers began to take the public into their confidence, and submitted to public criticism many official data which had hitherto been regarded as State secrets. The Minister of the Interior, for instance, in his annual report, spoke almost in the tone of a penitent, and confessed openly that the morality of the officials under his orders left much to be desired. He declared that the Emperor now showed a paternal confidence in his people, and as a proof of this he mentioned the significant fact that 9,000 persons had been liberated from police supervision. The other branches of the Administration underwent a similar transformation. The haughty, dictatorial tone which had hitherto been used by superiors to their subordinates, and by all ranks of officials to the public, was replaced by one of considerate politeness. About the same time the few Decembrists who were still alive were pardoned. The restrictions regarding the number of students in each university were abolished, the difficulty of obtaining foreign passports was removed, and the Press censure became singularly indulgent. Though no decided change had been made in the laws, it was universally felt that the spirit of Nicholas was no more.

The public, anxiously seeking after a sign, readily took these symptoms of change as a complete confirmation of their ardent hopes, and leaped at once to the conclusion that a vast, all-embracing system of radical reform was about to be undertaken—not secretly by the Administration, as had been the custom in the preceding reign when any little changes had to be made, but publicly, by the Government and the people in common. "The heart trembles with joy," said one of the leading organs of the Press, "in expectation of the great social reforms that are about to be effected—reforms that are thoroughly in accordance with the spirit, the wishes, and the expectations of the public." "The old

harmony and community of feeling," said another, "which has always existed between the Government and the people, save during short exceptional periods, has been fully re-established. The absence of all sentiment of caste, and the feeling of common origin and brotherhood which binds all classes of the Russian people into a homogeneous whole, will enable Russia to accomplish peacefully and without effort not only those great reforms which cost Europe centuries of struggle and bloodshed, but also many which the nations of the West are still unable to accomplish, in consequence of feudal traditions and caste prejudices." The past was depicted in the blackest colours, and the nation was called upon to begin a new and glorious epoch of its history. "We have to struggle," it was said, "in the name of the highest truth against egotism and the puny interests of the moment; and we ought to prepare our children from their infancy to take part in that struggle which awaits every honest man. We have to thank the war for opening our eyes to the dark sides of our political and social organisation, and it is now our duty to profit by the lesson. But it must not be supposed that the Government can, single-handed, remedy the defects. The destinies of Russia are, as it were, a stranded vessel which the captain and crew cannot move, and which nothing, indeed, but the rising tide of the national life can raise and float."

Hearts beat quicker at the sound of these calls to action. Many heard this new teaching, if we may believe a contemporary authority, "with tears in their eyes"; then, "raising boldly their heads, they made a solemn vow that they would act honourably, perseveringly, fearlessly." Some of those who had formerly yielded to the force of circumstances now confessed their misdemeanours with bitterness of heart. "Tears of repentance," said a popular poet, "give relief, and call us to new exploits." Russia was compared to a strong giant who awakes from sleep, stretches his brawny limbs, collects his thoughts, and prepares to atone for his long inactivity by feats of untold prowess. All believed, or at least assumed, that the recognition of defects would necessarily entail their removal. When an actor in one of the St. Petersburg theatres shouted from the stage, "Let

us proclaim throughout all Russia that the time has come for tearing up evil by the roots!" the audience gave way to the most frantic enthusiasm. "Altogether a joyful time," says one who took part in the excitement, "as when, after the long winter, the genial breath of spring glides over the cold, petrified earth, and nature awakens from her deathlike sleep. Speech, long restrained by police and censorial regulations, now flows smoothly, majestically, like a mighty river that has just been freed from ice."

Under these influences a multitude of newspapers and periodicals were founded, and the current literature entirely changed its character. The purely literary and historical questions which had chiefly engaged the attention of the reading public were thrown aside and forgotten, unless they could be made to illustrate some principle of political or social science. Criticisms on style and diction, explanations of æsthetic principles, metaphysical discussions—all this seemed miserable trifling to men who wished to devote themselves to gigantic practical interests. "Science," it was said, "has now descended from the heights of philosophic abstraction into the arena of real life." The periodicals were accordingly filled with articles on railways, banks, free trade, education, agriculture, communal institutions, local self-government, joint-stock companies, and with crushing philippics against personal and national vanity, inordinate luxury, administrative tyranny, and the habitual peculation of the officials.

This last-named subject received special attention. During the preceding reign any attempt to criticise publicly the character or acts of an official was regarded as a very heinous offence; now there was a deluge of sketches, tales, comedies, and monologues, describing the corruption of the Administration, and explaining the ingenious devices by which the *tchinóvniks* increased their scanty salaries. The public would read nothing that had not a direct or indirect bearing on the questions of the day, and whatever had such a bearing was read with interest. It did not seem at all strange that a drama should be written in defence of free trade, or a poem in advocacy of some peculiar mode of taxation; that an author should expound his political ideas in a

tale, and his antagonist reply by a comedy. A few men of the old school protested feebly against this "prostitution of art," but they received little attention, and the doctrine that art should be cultivated for its own sake was scouted as an invention of aristocratic indolence. Here is an *ipsa pinxit* of the literature of the time:—"Literature has come to look at Russia with her own eyes, and sees that the idyllic romantic personages which the poets formerly loved to describe have no objective existence. Having taken off her French glove, she offers her hand to the rude, hard-working labourer, and observing lovingly Russian village life, she feels herself in her native land. The writers of the present have analysed the past, and, having separated themselves from aristocratic *littérateurs* and aristocratic society, have demolished their former idols."

By far the most influential periodical at the commencement of the movement was the *Kólokol*, or *Bell*, a fortnightly journal published in London by Herzen, who was at that time an important personage among the political refugees. Herzen was a man of education and culture, with ultra-radical opinions, and not averse from using revolutionary methods of reform when he considered them necessary. His intimate relations with many of the leading men in Russia enabled him to obtain secret information of the most important and varied kind, and his sparkling wit, biting satire, and clear, terse, brilliant style secured him a large number of readers. He seemed to know everything that was done in the ministries and even in the Cabinet of the Emperor,* and he exposed most mercilessly every abuse that came to his knowledge. We who are accustomed to free political discussion can hardly form a conception of the avidity with which his articles were read, and the effect which they produced. Though strictly prohibited by the Press censure, the *Kólokol* found its way across the frontier in thousands of copies, and was eagerly perused and commented on by

* As an illustration of this, the following anecdote is told:—One number of the *Kólokol* contained a violent attack on an important personage of the Court, and the accused, or some one of his friends, considered it advisable to have a copy of the paper specially printed for the Emperor without the objectionable article. The Emperor did not at first discover the trick, but shortly afterwards he received from London a polite note containing the article which had been omitted, and informing him how he had been deceived.

all ranks of the educated classes. The Emperor himself received it regularly, and high-placed delinquents examined it with fear and trembling. In this way Herzen was for some years, though an exile, an important political personage, and did much to awaken and keep up the reform enthusiasm.

But where were the Conservatives all this time? How came it that for two or three years no voice was raised and no protest made even against the rhetorical exaggerations of the new-born liberalism? Where were the representatives of the old regime, who had been so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Nicholas? Where were those ministers who had systematically extinguished the least indication of private initiative, those "satraps" who had stamped out the least symptom of insubordination or discontent, those Press Censors who had diligently suppressed the mildest expression of liberal opinion, those thousands of well-intentioned proprietors who had regarded as dangerous free-thinkers and treasonable republicans all who ventured to express dissatisfaction with the existing state of things? A short time before, the Conservatives composed at least nine-tenths of the upper classes, and now they had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

It is scarcely necessary to say that in a country accustomed to political life, such a sudden, unopposed revolution in public opinion could not possibly take place. The key to the mystery lies in the fact that for centuries Russia had known nothing of political life or political parties. Those who were sometimes called Conservatives were in reality not Conservatives in our sense of the term. If we say that they had a certain amount of Conservatism, we must add that it was of the latent, passive, unreasoned kind—the fruit of indolence and apathy. Their political creed had but one article: Thou shalt love the Tsar with all thy might, and carefully abstain from all resistance to his will—especially when it happens that the Tsar is a man of the Nicholas type. So long as Nicholas lived they had passively acquiesced in his system—active acquiescence had been neither demanded nor desired—but when he died, the system of which he was the soul died with him.

What then could they seek to defend? They were told that the system which they had been taught to regard as the sheet-anchor of the State was in reality the chief cause of the national disasters; and to this they could make no reply, because they had no better explanation of their own to offer. They were convinced that the Russian soldier was the best soldier in the world, and they knew that in the recent war the army had not been victorious; the system, therefore, must be to blame. They were told that a series of gigantic reforms was necessary in order to restore Russia to her proper place among the nations; and to this they could make no answer, for they had never studied such abstract questions. And one thing they did know: that those who hesitated to admit the necessity of gigantic reforms were branded by the Press as ignorant, narrow-minded, prejudiced, and egotistical, and were held up to derision as men who did not know the most elementary principles of political and economic science. Freely expressed public opinion was such a new phenomenon in Russia that the Press was able for some time to exercise a "Liberal" tyranny scarcely less severe than the "Conservative" tyranny of the Censors in the preceding reign. Men who would have stood fire gallantly on the field of battle quailed before the poisoned darts of Herzen in the *Kólokol*. Under such circumstances, even the few who possessed some vague Conservative convictions refrained from publicly expressing them.

The men who had played a more or less active part during the preceding reign, and who might therefore be expected to have clearer and deeper convictions, were specially incapable of offering opposition to the prevailing Liberal enthusiasm. Their Conservatism was of quite as limp a kind as that of the landed proprietors who were not in the public service, for under Nicholas the higher a man was placed the less likely was he to have political convictions of any kind outside the simple political creed above referred to. Besides this, they belonged to that class which was for the moment under the anathema of public opinion, and they had drawn direct personal advantage from the system which was now recognised as the chief cause of the national disasters.

For a time the name of *tchinóvnik* became a term of reproach and derision, and the position of those who bore it was comically painful. They strove to prove that, though they held a post in the public service, they were entirely free from the *tchinóvnik* spirit—that there was nothing of the genuine *tchinóvnik* about them. Those who had formerly paraded their *tchin* (official rank) on all occasions, in season and out of season, became half ashamed to admit that they had the rank of General; for the title no longer commanded respect, and had become associated with all that was antiquated, formal, and stupid. Among the young generation it was used most disrespectfully as equivalent to "pompous blockhead." Zealous officials who had lately regarded the acquisition of stars and orders as among the chief ends of man, were fain to conceal those hard-won trophies, lest some cynical "Liberal" might notice them and make them the butt of his satire. "Look at the depth of humiliation to which you have brought the country"—such was the chorus of reproach that was ever ringing in their ears—"with your red tape, your Chinese formalism, and your principle of lifeless, unreasoning, mechanical obedience! You asserted constantly that you were the only true patriots, and branded with the name of traitor those who warned you of the insane folly of your conduct. You see now what it has all come to. The men whom you helped to send to the mines turn out to have been the true patriots." *

And to these reproaches what could they reply? Like a child who has in his frolics inadvertently set the house on fire, they could only look contrite, and say they did not mean it. They had simply accepted without criticism the existing order of things, and ranged themselves among those who were officially recognised as "the well-intentioned." If they had always avoided the Liberals, and perhaps helped to persecute them, it was simply because all "well-intentioned" people said that Liberals were "restless" and

* It was a common saying at that time that nearly all the best men in Russia had spent a part of their lives in Siberia, and it was proposed to publish a biographical dictionary of remarkable men, in which every article was to end thus: "Exiled to —— in 18—." I am not aware how far the project was seriously entertained, but, of course, the book was never published.

dangerous to the State. Those who were not convinced of their errors simply kept silence, but the great majority passed over to the ranks of the Progressists, and many endeavoured to redeem their past by showing extreme zeal for the Liberal cause.

In explanation of this extraordinary outburst of reform enthusiasm, we must further remember that the Russian educated classes, in spite of the severe northern climate which is supposed to make the blood circulate slowly, are extremely impulsive. They are fettered by no venerable historical prejudices, and are wonderfully sensitive to the seductive influence of grandiose projects, especially when these excite the patriotic feelings. Then there was the simple force of reaction—the rebound which naturally followed the terrific compression of the preceding reign. Without disrespect, the Russians of that time may be compared to schoolboys who have just escaped from the rigorous discipline of a severe schoolmaster. In the first moments of freedom it was supposed that there would be no more discipline or compulsion. The utmost respect was to be shown to "human dignity," and every Russian was to act spontaneously and zealously at the great work of national regeneration. All thirsted for reforming activity. The men in authority were inundated with projects of reform—some of them anonymous, and others from obscure individuals; some of them practical, and very many wildly fantastic. Even the grammarians showed their sympathy with the spirit of the time by proposing to expel summarily all redundant letters from the Russian alphabet!

The fact that very few people had clear, precise ideas as to what was to be done did not prevent, but rather tended to increase, the reform enthusiasm. All had at least one common feeling—dislike to what had previously existed. It was only when it became necessary to forsake pure negation, and to create something, that the conceptions became clearer, and a variety of opinions appeared. At the first moment there was merely unanimity in negation, and an impulsive enthusiasm for beneficent reforms in general.

The first specific proposals were direct deductions from the lessons taught by the war. The war had shown in a

terrible way the disastrous consequences of having merely primitive means of communication; the Press and the public began, accordingly, to speak about the necessity of constructing railways, roads, and river steamers. The war had shown that a country which has not developed its natural resources very soon becomes exhausted if it has to make a great national effort; accordingly the public and the Press talked about the necessity of developing the natural resources, and about the means by which this desirable end might be attained. It had been shown by the war that a system of education which tends to make men mere apathetic automatons cannot produce even a good army; accordingly the public and the Press began to discuss the different systems of education and the numerous questions of pedagogical science. It had been shown by the war that the best intentions of a Government will necessarily be frustrated if the majority of the officials are dishonest or incapable; accordingly the public and the Press began to speak about the paramount necessity of reforming the Administration in all its branches.

It must not, however, be supposed that in thus laying to heart the lessons taught by the war and endeavouring to profit by them the Russians were actuated by warlike feelings, and desired to avenge themselves as soon as possible on their victorious enemies. On the contrary, the whole movement and the spirit which animated it were eminently pacific. Prince Gortchakov's saying, "La Russie ne boude pas, elle se recueille," was more than a diplomatic repartee —it was a true and graphic statement of the case. Though the Russians are very inflammable, and can be very violent when their patriotic feelings are aroused, they are, individually and as a nation, singularly free from rancour and the spirit of revenge. After the termination of hostilities they really bore little malice towards the Western Powers, except towards Austria, which was believed to have been treacherous and ungrateful to the country that had saved her in 1849. Their patriotism now took the form, not of revenge, but of a desire to raise their country to the level of the Western nations. If they thought of military matters at all, they assumed that military power would be obtained

as a natural and inevitable result of high civilisation and good government.

As a first step towards the realisation of the vast schemes contemplated, voluntary associations began to be formed for industrial and commercial purposes, and a law was issued for the creation of limited liability companies. In the space of two years, forty-seven companies of this kind were founded, with a combined capital of 358,000,000 roubles. To understand the full significance of these figures, we must know that from the founding of the first joint-stock company in 1799 down to 1853 only twenty-six companies had been formed, and their united capital amounted only to 32,000,000 roubles. Thus in the space of two years (1857-58) eleven times as much capital was subscribed to joint-stock companies as had been subscribed during half a century previous to the war. The most exaggerated expectations were entertained as to the national and private advantages which must necessarily result from these undertakings, and it became a patriotic duty to subscribe liberally. The periodical literature depicted in glowing terms the marvellous results that had been obtained in other countries by the principle of co-operation, and sanguine readers believed that they had discovered a patriotic way of speedily becoming rich.

These were, however, mere secondary matters, and the public were anxiously waiting for the Government to begin the grand reforming campaign. When the educated classes awoke to the necessity of great reforms, there was no clear conception as to how the great work should be undertaken. There was so much to be done that it was no easy matter to decide what should be done first. Administrative, judicial, social, economic, financial, and political reforms seemed all equally pressing. Gradually, however, it became evident that precedence must be given to the question of serfage. It was absurd to speak about progress, humanitarianism, education, self-government, equality in the eye of the law, and similar matters, so long as one-half of the population was excluded from the enjoyment of ordinary civil rights. So long as serfage existed it was mere mockery to talk about reorganising Russia according to the latest results of

political and social science. How could a system of even-handed justice be introduced when 20,000,000 of the peasantry were subject to the arbitrary will of the landed proprietors? How could agricultural or industrial progress be made without free labour? How could the Government take active measures for the spread of national education when it had no direct control over one-half of the peasantry? Above all, how could it be hoped that a great moral regeneration could take place so long as the nation voluntarily retained the stigma of serfage and slavery?

All this was very generally felt by the educated classes, but no one ventured to raise the question until it should be known what were the views of the Emperor on the subject. How the question was gradually raised, how it was treated by the nobles, and how it was ultimately solved by the famous law of February 19th (March 3rd), 1861,* I now propose to relate.

* February 19th according to the old style, which is still used in Russia, and March 3rd according to our method of reckoning.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SERFS

BEFORE proceeding to describe the Emancipation, it may be well to explain briefly how the Russian peasants became serfs, and what serfage in Russia really was.

In the earliest period of Russian history the rural population was composed of three distinct classes. At the bottom of the scale stood the slaves, who were very numerous. Their numbers were continually augmented by prisoners of war, by freemen who voluntarily sold themselves as slaves, by insolvent debtors, and by certain categories of criminals. Immediately above the slaves were the free agricultural labourers, who had no permanent domicile, but wandered about the country and settled temporarily where they happened to find work and satisfactory remuneration. In the third place, distinct from these two classes, and in some respects higher in the social scale, were the peasants properly so called.*

These peasants proper, who may be roughly described as small farmers or cottiers, were distinguished from the free agricultural labourers in two respects: they were possessors of land in property or usufruct, and they were members of a rural Commune. The Communes were free primitive corporations which elected their office-bearers from among the heads of families, and sent delegates to act as judges or assessors in the Prince's Court. Some of the Communes possessed land of their own, whilst others were settled on the estates of the landed proprietors or on the extensive domains of the monasteries. In the latter case the peasant paid a fixed yearly rent in money, in produce, or in labour, according to the terms of his contract with the proprietor or the monastery; but he did not thereby sacrifice in any

* My chief authority for the early history of the peasantry has been Bêláev, "Krestyánye na Rusí," Moscow, 1860; a most able and conscientious work.

way his personal liberty. As soon as he had fulfilled the engagements stipulated in the contract and had settled accounts with the owner of the land, he was free to change his domicile as he pleased.

If we turn now from these early times to the eighteenth century, we find that the position of the rural population has entirely changed in the interval. The distinction between slaves, agricultural labourers, and peasants has completely disappeared. All three categories have melted together into a common class, called serfs, who are regarded as the property of the landed proprietors or of the State. "The proprietors sell their peasants and domestic servants not even in families, but one by one, like cattle, as is done nowhere else in the whole world, from which practice there is not a little wailing." * And yet the Government, whilst professing to regret the existence of the practice, takes no energetic measures to prevent it. On the contrary, it deprives the serfs of all legal protection, and expressly commands that if any serf shall dare to present a petition against his master, he shall be punished with the knout and transported for life to the mines of Nertchinsk. (Ukaz of August 22nd, 1767.)†

How did this important change take place, and how is it to be explained?

If we ask any educated Russian who has never specially occupied himself with historical investigations regarding the origin of serfage in Russia, he will probably reply somewhat in this fashion: "In Russia slavery has never existed (!), and even serfage in the West-European sense has never been recognised by law! In ancient times the rural population was completely free, and every peasant might change his domicile on St. George's Day—that is to say, at the end of the agricultural year. This right of migration was abolished by Tsar Boris Godunóv—who, by the way, was half a Tartar and more than half a usurper—and herein lies the essence of serfage in the Russian sense. The

* These words are taken from an Imperial ukaz of April 15th, 1721. Pólnoye Sobránye Zakónov, No. 3,770.

† This is an ukaz of the liberal and tolerant Catherine! How she reconciled it with her respect and admiration for Beccaria's humane views on criminal law she does not explain.

peasants have never been the property of the landed proprietors, but have always been personally free; and the only legal restriction on their liberty was that they were not allowed to change their domicile without the permission of the proprietor. If so-called serfs were sometimes sold, the practice was simply an abuse not justified by legislation."

This simple explanation, in which may be detected a note of patriotic pride, is almost universally accepted in Russia; but it contains, like most popular conceptions of the distant past, a curious mixture of fact and fiction. Serious historical investigation tends to show that the power of the proprietors over the peasants came into existence, not suddenly, as the result of an ukaz, but gradually, as a consequence of permanent economic and political causes, and that Boris Godunóv was not more to blame than many of his predecessors and successors.*

Although the peasants in ancient Russia were free to wander about as they chose, there appeared at a very early period—long before the reign of Boris Godunóv—a decided tendency in the princes, in the proprietors, and in the Communes, to prevent migration. This tendency will be easily understood if we remember that land without labourers is useless, and that in Russia at that time the population was small in comparison with the amount of reclaimed and easily reclaimable land. The prince desired to have as many inhabitants as possible in his principality, because the amount of his regular revenues depended on the number of the population. The landed proprietor desired to have as many peasants as possible on his estate, to till for him the land which he reserved for his own use, and to pay him for the remainder a yearly rent in money, produce, or labour. The free Communes desired to have a number of members sufficient to keep the whole of the Communal land under cultivation, because each Commune had to pay yearly to the prince a fixed sum in money or agricultural produce, and the greater the number of able-bodied members, the less each individual had to pay. To use the language of political

* See especially Pobêdonostsev, in the *Rússki Vêstnik*, 1858, No. 11, and "Istoritcheskiva izslêdovaniya statyí" (St. Petersburg, 1876), by the same author; also Pogódin, in the *Rússkaya Besêda*, 1858, No. 4.

economy, the princes, the landed proprietors, and the free Communes all appeared as buyers in the labour market; and the demand was far in excess of the supply.

Nowadays, when young colonies or landed proprietors in an outlying corner of the world are similarly in need of labour, they seek to supply the want by organising a regular system of importing labourers—using illegal violent means, such as kidnapping expeditions, merely as an exceptional expedient. In old Russia any such regularly organised system was impossible, and consequently illegal or violent measures were not the exception, but the rule. The chief practical advantage of the frequent military expeditions for those who took part in them was the acquisition of prisoners of war, who were commonly transformed into slaves by their captors. If it be true, as some assert, that only unbaptised prisoners were legally considered lawful booty, it is certain that in practice before the unification of the principalities under the Tsars of Moscow, little distinction was made in this respect between unbaptised foreigners and Orthodox Russians.* A similar method was sometimes employed for the acquisition of free peasants: the more powerful proprietors organised kidnapping expeditions, and carried off by force the peasants settled on the land of their weaker neighbours.

Under these circumstances it was only natural that those who possessed this valuable commodity should do all in their power to keep it. Many, if not all, of the free Communes adopted the simple measure of refusing to allow a member to depart until he had found someone to take his place. The proprietors never, so far as we know, laid down formally such a principle, but in practice they did all in their power to retain the peasants actually settled on their estates. For this purpose some simply employed force, whilst others acted under cover of legal formalities. The peasant who accepted land from a proprietor rarely brought with him the necessary implements, cattle, and capital to begin at once his occupations, and to feed himself and his family till the

* On this subject see Tchitchérin, "Ópyty po istórii rússkago práva," Moscow, 1858, p. 162 *et seq.*; and Lokhvitski, "O plênnykh po drévnemu rússkomu právu," Moscow, 1855.

ensuing harvest. He was obliged, therefore, to borrow from his landlord, and the debt thus contracted was easily converted into a means of preventing his departure if he wished to change his domicile. We need not enter into further details. The proprietors were the capitalists of the time. Frequent bad harvests, plagues, fires, military raids, and similar misfortunes, often reduced even prosperous peasants to beggary. The muzhik was probably then, as now, only too ready to accept a loan without taking the necessary precautions for repaying it. The laws relating to debt were terribly severe, and there was no powerful judicial organisation to protect the weak. If we remember all this, we shall not be surprised to learn that a considerable part of the peasantry were practically serfs before serfage was recognised by law.

So long as the country was broken up into independent principalities, and each landowner was almost an independent prince on his estate, the peasants easily found a remedy for these abuses in flight. They fled to a neighbouring proprietor who could protect them from their former landlord and his claims, or they took refuge in a neighbouring principality, where they were, of course, still safer. All this was changed when the independent principalities were transformed into the Tsardom of Muscovy. The Tsars had new reasons for opposing the migration of the peasants and new means for preventing it. The old princes had simply given grants of land to those who served them, and left the grantee to do with his land what seemed good to him; the Tsars, on the contrary, gave to those who served them merely the usufruct of a certain quantity of land, and carefully proportioned the quantity to the rank and the obligations of the receiver.

In this change there was plainly a new reason for fixing the peasants to the soil. The real value of a grant depended not so much on the amount of land as on the number of peasants settled on it, and hence any migration of the population was tantamount to a removal of the ancient landmarks —that is to say, to a disturbance of the arrangements made by the Tsar. Suppose, for instance, that the Tsar granted to a *Boyár* or some lesser dignitary an estate on which were

settled a hundred peasant families, and that afterwards fifty of these emigrated to neighbouring proprietors. In this case the recipient might justly complain that he had lost half of his estate—though the amount of land was in no way diminished—and that he was consequently unable to fulfil his obligations. Such complaints would be rarely, if ever, made by the great dignitaries, for they had the means of attracting peasants to their estates;* but the small proprietors had good reason to complain, and the Tsar was bound to remove their grievances. The attaching of the peasants to the soil was, in fact, the natural consequence of feudal tenures—an integral part of the Muscovite political system. The Tsar compelled the nobles to serve him, and was unable to pay them in money. He was obliged, therefore, to procure for them some other means of livelihood. Evidently the simplest method of solving the difficulty was to give them land, with a certain number of labourers, and to prevent the labourers from migrating.

Towards the free Communes the Tsars had to act in the same way for similar reasons. The Communes, like the nobles, had obligations to the Sovereign, and could not fulfil them if the peasants were allowed to migrate from one locality to another. They were, in a certain sense, the property of the Tsar, and it was only natural that the Tsar should do for himself what he had done for his nobles.

With these new reasons for fixing the peasants to the soil came, as has been said, new means of preventing migration. Formerly it was an easy matter to flee to a neighbouring principality, but now all the principalities were combined under one ruler, and the foundations of a centralised administration were laid. Severe fugitive laws were issued against those who attempted to change their domicile and against the proprietors who should harbour the runaways. Unless the peasant chose to face the difficulties of "squatting" in the inhospitable northern forests, or resolved to

* There are plain indications in the documents of the time that the great dignitaries were at first hostile to the *adscriptio glebæ*. We find a similar phenomenon at a much more recent date in Little Russia. Long after serfage had been legalised in that region by Catherine II., the great proprietors, such as Rumyantsev, Razumovski, Bezborodko, continued to attract to their estates the peasants of the smaller proprietors. See the article of Pogódin in the *Rússkaya Besêda*, 1858, No. 4, p. 154.

brave the dangers of the Steppe, he could nowhere escape the heavy hand of Moscow.*

The indirect consequences of thus attaching the peasants to the soil did not at once become apparent. The serf retained all the civil rights he had hitherto enjoyed, except that of changing his domicile. He could still appear before the courts of law as a free man, freely engage in trade or industry, enter into all manner of contracts, and rent land for cultivation.

But as time wore on, the change in the legal relation between the two classes became apparent in real life. In attaching the peasantry to the soil, the Government had been so thoroughly engrossed with the direct financial aim that it entirely overlooked, or wilfully shut its eyes to, the ulterior consequences which must necessarily flow from the policy it adopted. It was evident that as soon as the relation between proprietor and peasant was removed from the region of voluntary contract by being rendered indissoluble, the weaker of the two parties legally tied together must fall completely under the power of the stronger unless energetically protected by the law and the Administration. To this inevitable consequence the Government paid no attention. So far from endeavouring to protect the peasantry from the oppression of the proprietors, it did not even determine by law the mutual obligations which ought to exist between the two classes. Taking advantage of this omission, the proprietors soon began to impose whatever obligations they thought fit; and as they had no legal means of enforcing fulfilment, they gradually introduced a patriarchal jurisdiction similar to that which they exercised over their slaves, with fines and corporal punishment as means of coercion. From this they ere long proceeded a step further, and began to sell their peasants without the land on which they were settled. At first this was merely a flagrant abuse unsanctioned by law, for the peasant had never been declared the

* The above account of the origin of serfage in Russia is founded on a careful examination of the evidence which we possess on the subject, but I must not conceal the fact that some of the statements are founded on inference rather than on direct, unequivocal documentary evidence. The whole question is one of great difficulty, and will in all probability not be satisfactorily solved until a large number of the old local Land Registers (*Pistsóviya Knigi*) have been published and carefully studied.

private property of the landed proprietor; but the Government tacitly sanctioned the practice, and even exacted dues on such sales, as on the sale of slaves. Finally the right to sell peasants without land was formally recognised by various Imperial ukazes.*

The old Communal organisation still existed on the estates of the proprietors, and had never been legally deprived of its authority, but it was now powerless to protect the members. The proprietor could easily overcome any active resistance by selling or converting into domestic servants the peasants who dared to oppose his will.

The peasantry had thus sunk to the condition of serfs, practically deprived of legal protection and subject to the arbitrary will of the proprietors; but they were still in some respects legally and actually distinguished from the slaves on the one hand and the "free wandering people" on the other. These distinctions were obliterated by Peter the Great and his immediate successors.

To effect his great civil and military reforms, Peter required an annual revenue such as his predecessors had never dreamed of, and he was consequently always on the look-out for some new object of taxation. When looking about for this purpose, his eye naturally fell on the slaves, the domestic servants, and the free agricultural labourers. None of these classes paid taxes—a fact which stood in flagrant contradiction to his fundamental principle of polity, that every subject should in some way serve the State. He caused, therefore, a national census to be taken, in which all the various classes of the rural population—slaves, domestic servants, agricultural labourers, peasants—should be inscribed in one category; and he imposed equally on all the members of this category a poll-tax, in lieu of the former land-tax, which had lain exclusively on the peasants. To facilitate the collection of this tax the proprietors were made responsible for their serfs; and the "free wandering people" who did not wish to enter the army were ordered, under pain of being sent to the galleys, to inscribe themselves as members of a Commune or as serfs to some proprietor.

* For instance, the ukazes of October 13th, 1675, and June 25th, 1682. See Bêláev, pp. 203-209.

These measures had a considerable influence, if not on the actual position of the peasantry, at least on the legal conceptions regarding them. By making the proprietor pay the poll-tax for his serfs, as if they were slaves or cattle, the law seemed to sanction the idea that they were part of his goods and chattels. Besides this, it introduced the entirely new principle that any member of the rural population not legally attached to the land or to a proprietor should be regarded as a vagrant, and treated accordingly. Thus the principle that every subject should in some way serve the State had found its complete realisation. There was no longer any room in Russia for free men.

The change in the position of the peasantry, together with the hardships and oppression by which it was accompanied, naturally increased fugitivism and vagrancy. Thousands of serfs ran away from their masters, and fled to the Steppe or sought enrolment in the army. To prevent this the Government considered it necessary to take severe and energetic measures. The serfs were forbidden to enlist without the permission of their masters, and those who persisted in presenting themselves for enrolment were to be beaten "cruelly" (*zhestóko*) with the knout, and sent to the mines.* The proprietors, on the other hand, received the right to transport without trial their unruly serfs to Siberia, and even to send them to the mines for life.†

If these stringent measures had any effect it was not of long duration, for there soon appeared among the serfs a still stronger spirit of discontent and insubordination, which threatened to produce a general agrarian rising, and actually did create a movement resembling in many respects the Jacquerie in France and the Peasant War in Germany. A glance at the causes of this movement will help us to understand the real nature of serfage in Russia.

Up to this point serfage had, in spite of its flagrant abuses, a certain theoretical justification. It was, as we have seen, merely a part of a general political system in which obligatory service was imposed on all classes of the population. The serfs served the nobles in order that the nobles

* Ukaz of June 2nd, 1742.

† See ukazes of January 17th, 1765, and of January 28th, 1766.

might serve the Tsar. In 1762 this theory was entirely overturned by a manifesto of Peter III. abolishing the obligatory service of the Noblesse. According to strict justice this act ought to have been followed by the liberation of the serfs, for if the nobles were no longer obliged to serve the State they had no just claim to the service of the peasants. The Government had so completely forgotten the original meaning of serfage that it never thought of carrying out the measure to its logical consequences, but the peasantry held tenaciously to the ancient conceptions, and looked impatiently for a second manifesto liberating them from the power of the proprietors. Reports were spread that such a manifesto really existed, and was being concealed by the nobles. A spirit of insubordination accordingly appeared among the rural population, and local insurrections broke out in several parts of the Empire.

At this critical moment Peter III. was dethroned and assassinated by a Court conspiracy. The peasants, who of course knew nothing of the real motives of the conspirators, supposed that the Tsar had been assassinated by those who wished to preserve serfage, and believed him to be a martyr in the cause of Emancipation. At the news of the catastrophe their hopes of Emancipation fell, but soon they were revived by new rumours. The Tsar, it was said, had escaped from the conspirators and was in hiding. Soon he would appear among his faithful peasants, and with their aid would regain his throne and punish the wicked oppressors. Anxiously he was awaited, and at last the glad tidings came that he had appeared in the Don country, that thousands of Cossacks had joined his standard, that he was everywhere putting the proprietors to death without mercy, and that he would soon arrive in the ancient capital!

Peter III. was in reality in his grave, but there was a terrible element of truth in these reports. A pretender, a Cossack called Pugatchév, had really appeared on the Don, and had assumed the rôle which the peasants expected the late Tsar to play. Advancing through the country of the Lower Volga, he took several places of importance, put to death all the proprietors he could find, defeated on more than one occasion the troops sent against him, and threatened to

advance into the heart of the Empire. It seemed as if the old troublous times were about to be renewed—as if the country was once more to be pillaged by those wild Cossacks of the Southern Steppe. But the pretender showed himself incapable of playing the part he had assumed. His inhuman cruelty estranged many who would otherwise have followed him, and he was too deficient in decision and energy to take advantage of favourable circumstances. If it be true that he conceived the idea of creating a peasant empire (*muzhítskoé tsárstvo*), he was not the man to realise such a scheme. After a series of mistakes and defeats he was taken prisoner, and the insurrection was quelled.*

Meanwhile Peter III. had been succeeded by his consort, Catherine II. As she had no legal right to the throne, and was by birth a foreigner, she could not gain the affections of the common people, and was obliged to court the favour of the Noblesse. In such a difficult position she could not venture to apply her humane principles to the question of serfage. Even during the first years of her reign, when she had no reason to fear agrarian disturbances, she increased rather than diminished the power of the proprietors over their serfs, and the Pugatchév affair confirmed her in this line of policy. During her reign serfage may be said to have reached its climax. The serfs were regarded by the law as part of the master's immovable property†—as part of the working capital of the estate—and as such they were bought, sold, and given as presents ‡ in hundreds and thousands, sometimes with the land, and sometimes without it, sometimes in families, and sometimes individually. The only legal restriction was that they should not be offered for sale

* Whilst living among the Bashkirs of the province of Samára in 1872, I found some interesting traditions regarding this pretender. Though nearly a century had elapsed since his death (1775), his name, his personal appearance, and his exploits were well known even to the younger generation. My informants firmly believed that he was not an impostor, but the genuine Tsar, dethroned by his ambitious consort, and that he never was taken prisoner, but "went away into foreign lands." When I asked whether he was still alive, and whether he might not one day return, they replied that they did not know.

† See Ukaz of October 7th, 1792.

‡ As an example of making presents of serfs, the following may be cited: Count Panin presented some of his subordinates for an Imperial recompense, and on receiving a refusal, made them a present of 4,000 serfs from his own estates.—Béláev, p. 320.

at the time of the conscription, and that they should at no time be sold publicly by auction, because such a custom was considered as "unbecoming in a European State." In all other respects the serfs might be treated as private property; and this view is to be found not only in the legislation, but also in the popular conceptions. It became customary—a custom that continued down to the year 1861—to compute a noble's fortune, not by his yearly revenue or the extent of his estate, but by the number of his serfs. Instead of saying that a man had so many hundreds or thousands a year, or so many acres, it was commonly said that he had so many hundreds or thousands of "souls." And over these "souls" he exercised the most unlimited authority. The serfs had no legal means of self-defence. The Government feared that the granting to them of judicial or administrative protection would inevitably awaken in them a spirit of insubordination, and hence it was ordered that those who presented complaints should be punished with the knout and sent to the mines.* It was only in extreme cases, when some instance of atrocious cruelty happened to reach the ears of the Sovereign, that the authorities interfered with the proprietor's jurisdiction, and these cases had not the slightest influence on the proprietors in general.†

The last years of the eighteenth century may be regarded as the turning point in the history of serfage. Up till that time the power of the proprietors had steadily increased, and the area of serfage had rapidly expanded. Under the Emperor Paul (1796-1801) we find the first decided symptoms of a reaction. He regarded the proprietors as his most efficient officers of police, but he desired to limit their authority, and for this purpose issued an ukaz to the effect that the serfs should not be forced to work for their masters

* See the ukazes of August 22nd, 1767, and March 30th, 1781.

† Perhaps the most horrible case on record is that of a certain lady called Saltykóv, who was brought to justice in 1768. According to the ukaz regarding her crimes, she had killed by inhuman tortures in the course of ten or eleven years about a hundred of her serfs, chiefly of the female sex, and among them several young girls of eleven and twelve years of age. According to popular belief her cruelty proceeded from cannibal propensities, but this was not confirmed by the judicial investigation. Details in the *Rússki Arkhiv*, 1865, pp. 644-652. The atrocities practised on the estate of Count Araktchéyev, the favourite of Alexander I., at the commencement of last century, have been frequently described, and are scarcely less revolting.

more than three days in the week. With the accession of Alexander I., in 1801, commenced a long series of abortive projects for a general emancipation, and endless attempts to correct the more glaring abuses; and during the reign of Nicholas no fewer than six committees were formed at different times to consider the question. But the practical result of these efforts was extremely small. The custom of giving grants of land with peasants was abolished; certain slight restrictions were placed on the authority of the proprietors; a number of the worst specimens of the class were removed from the administration of their estates; a few who were convicted of atrocious cruelty were exiled to Siberia;* and some thousands of serfs were actually emancipated; but no decisive radical measures were attempted, and the serfs did not receive even the right of making formal complaints. Serfage had, in fact, come to be regarded as a vital part of the State organisation, and the only sure basis for autocracy. It was therefore treated tenderly, and the rights and protection accorded by various ukazes were almost entirely illusory.

If we compare the development of serfage in Russia and in Western Europe, we find very many points in common, but in Russia the movement had certain peculiarities. One of the most important of these was caused by the rapid development of the Autocratic Power. In feudal Europe, where there was no strong central authority to control the Noblesse, the free rural Communes entirely, or almost entirely, disappeared. They were either appropriated by the nobles or voluntarily submitted to powerful landed proprietors or to monasteries, and in this way the whole of the reclaimed land, with a few rare exceptions, became the property of the nobles or of the Church. In Russia we find the same movement, but it was arrested by the Imperial power before all the land had been appropriated. The nobles could reduce to serfage the peasants settled on their estates, but they could not take possession of the free Communes,

* Speranski, for instance, when Governor of the province of Penza, brought to justice, among others, a proprietor who had caused one of his serfs to be flogged to death, and a lady who had murdered a serf boy by pricking him with a penknife because he had neglected to take proper care of a tame rabbit committed to his charge!—Korff, "Zhizn Speránskago," II., p. 127, note.

because such an appropriation would have infringed the rights and diminished the revenues of the Tsar. Down to the commencement of the last century, it is true, large grants of land with serfs were made to favoured individuals among the Noblesse, and in the reign of Paul (1796-1801) a considerable number of estates were affected to the use of the Imperial family under the name of appanages (*Udyélniya iméniya*); but on the other hand, the extensive Church lands, when secularised by Catherine II., were not distributed among the nobles, as in many other countries, but were transformed into State Domains. Thus, at the date of the Emancipation (1861), by far the greater part of the territory belonged to the State, and one-half of the rural population were so-called State Peasants (*Gosudárstvenniye krestyanye*).

Regarding the condition of these State Peasants, or Peasants of the Domains, as they are sometimes called, I may say briefly that they were, in a certain sense, serfs, being attached to the soil like the others; but their condition was, as a rule, somewhat better than the serfs in the narrower acceptation of the term. They had to suffer much from the tyranny and extortion of the special administration under which they lived, but they had more land and more liberty than was commonly enjoyed on the estates of resident proprietors, and their position was much less precarious. It is often asserted that the officials of the Domains were worse than the serf-owners, because they had not the same personal interest in the prosperity of the peasantry; but this à priori reasoning does not stand the test of experience.

It is not a little interesting to observe the numerical proportion and geographical distribution of these two rural classes. In European Russia, as a whole, about three-eighths of the population were composed of serfs belonging to the nobles;* but if we take the provinces separately we

*The exact numbers, according to official data, were—

Entire Population	60,909,309
Peasantry of all Classes	49,486,665
Of these latter there were—	
State Peasants	23,138,191
Peasants on the Lands of Proprietors	23,022,390
Peasants of the Appanages and other Departments ...	3,326,084
	49,486,665

find great variations from this average. In five provinces the serfs were less than 3 per cent., whilst in others they formed more than 70 per cent. of the population! This is not an accidental phenomenon. In the geographical distribution of serfage we can see reflected the origin and history of the institution.

If we were to construct a map showing the geographical distribution of the serf population, we should at once perceive that serfage radiated from Moscow. Starting from that city as a centre and travelling in any direction towards the confines of the Empire, we find that, after making allowance for a few disturbing local influences, the proportion of serfs regularly declines in the successive provinces traversed. In the region representing the old Muscovite Tsardom they form considerably more than half of the rural population. Immediately to the south and east of this, in the territory that was gradually annexed during the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth, the proportion varies from 25 to 50 per cent., and in the more recently annexed provinces it steadily decreases till it almost reaches zero.

We may perceive, too, that the percentage of serfs decreases towards the north much more rapidly than towards the east and south. This points to the essentially agricultural nature of serfage in its infancy. In the south and east there was abundance of rich "black earth" celebrated for its fertility, and the nobles in quest of estates naturally preferred this region to the inhospitable north, with its poor soil and severe climate.

A more careful examination of the supposed map* would bring out other interesting facts. Let me notice one by way of illustration. Had serfage been the result of conquest we should have found the Slavonic race settled on the State Domains, and the Finnish and Tartar tribes supplying the serfs of the nobles. In reality we find quite the reverse; the Finns and Tartars were nearly all State Peasants, and the serfs of the proprietors were nearly all of Slavonic race. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the Finnish and

* Such a map was actually constructed by Troinitski ("Krêpostnóe Naseléniye v Rossii," St. Petersburg, 1861), but it is not nearly so graphic as it might have been.

Tartar tribes inhabit chiefly the outlying regions, in which serfage never attained such dimensions as in the centre of the Empire.

The dues paid by the serfs were of three kinds: labour, money, and farm produce. The last-named is so unimportant that it may be dismissed in a few words. It consisted chiefly of eggs, chickens, lambs, mushrooms, wild berries, and linen cloth. The amount of these various products depended entirely on the will of the master. The other two kinds of dues, as more important, we must examine more closely.

When a proprietor had abundance of fertile land and wished to farm on his own account, he commonly demanded from his serfs as much labour as possible. Under such a master the serfs were probably free from money dues, and fulfilled their obligations to him by labouring in his fields in summer and transporting his grain to market in winter. When, on the contrary, a landowner had more serf labour at his disposal than he required for the cultivation of his fields, he put the superfluous serfs "on *obrók*"—that is to say, he allowed them to go and work where they pleased on condition of paying him a fixed yearly sum. Sometimes the proprietor did not farm at all on his own account, in which case he put all the serfs "on *obrók*," and generally gave to the Commune in usufruct the whole of the arable land and pasturage. In this way the *Mir* played the part of a tenant.

We have here the basis for a simple and important classification of estates in the time of serfage: (1) Estates on which the dues were exclusively in labour; (2) estates on which the dues were partly in labour and partly in money; and (3) estates on which the dues were exclusively in money.

In the manner of exacting the labour dues there was considerable variety. According to the famous manifesto of Paul I., the peasant could not be compelled to work more than three days in the week; but this law was by no means universally observed, and those who did observe it had various methods of applying it. A few took it literally, and laid down a rule that the serfs should work for them three

definite days in the week—for example, every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday—but this was an extremely inconvenient method, for it prevented the field labour from being carried on regularly. A much more rational system was that according to which one-half of the serfs worked the first three days of the week, and the other half the remaining three. In this way there was, without any contravention of the law, a regular and constant supply of labour. It seems, however, that the great majority of the proprietors followed no strict method, and paid no attention whatever to Paul's manifesto, which gave to the peasant no legal means of making formal complaints. They simply summoned daily as many labourers as they required. The evil consequences of this for the peasants' crops were in part counteracted by making the peasants sow their own grain a little later than that of the proprietor, so that the master's harvest-work was finished, or nearly finished, before their grain was ripe. This combination did not, however, always succeed, and in cases where there was a conflict of interests, the serf was, of course, the losing party. All that remained for him to do in such cases was to work a little in his own fields before six o'clock in the morning and after nine o'clock at night, and in order to render this possible he economised his strength, and worked as little as possible in his master's fields during the day.

It has frequently been remarked, and with much truth—though the indiscriminate application of the principle has often led to unjustifiable legislative inactivity—that the practical result of institutions depends less on the intrinsic abstract nature of the institutions themselves than on the character of those who work them. So it was with serfage. When a proprietor habitually acted towards his serfs in an enlightened, rational, humane way, they had little reason to complain of their position, and their life was much easier than that of many men who live in a state of complete individual freedom and unlimited, unrestricted competition. However paradoxical the statement may seem to those who are in the habit of regarding all forms of slavery from the sentimental point of view, it is unquestionable that the condition of serfs under such a proprietor as I have supposed was

more enviable than that of the majority of English agricultural labourers. Each family had a house of its own, with a cabbage garden, one or more horses, one or two cows, several sheep, poultry, agricultural implements, a share of the Communal land, and everything else necessary for carrying on its small farming operations; and in return for this it had to supply the proprietor with an amount of labour which was by no means oppressive. If, for instance, a serf had three adult sons—and the households, as I have said, were at that time generally numerous—two of them might work for the proprietor, whilst the father himself and the remaining son could attend exclusively to the family affairs. By the events which used to be called "the visitations of God" he had no fear of being permanently ruined. If his house were burnt, or his cattle died from the plague, or a series of "bad years" left him without seed for his fields, he could always count upon temporary assistance from his master. He was protected, too, against all oppression and exactions on the part of the officials: for the police, when there was any cause for its interference applied to the proprietor, who was to a certain extent responsible for his serfs. Thus the serf might live a tranquil, contented life, and die at a ripe old age, without ever having been conscious that serfage was a grievous burden.

If all the serfs had lived in this way we might, perhaps, regret that the emancipation was ever undertaken. In reality there was, as the French say, *le revers de la médaille,* and serfage generally appeared under a form very different from that which I have just depicted. The proprietors were, unfortunately, not all of the enlightened, humane type. Amongst them were many who demanded from their serfs an inordinate amount of labour, and treated them in a very inhumane fashion.

These oppressors of their serfs may be divided into four categories. First, there were the proprietors who managed their own estates, and oppressed simply for the purpose of increasing their revenues. Secondly, there were a number of retired officers, who wished to establish a certain order and discipline on their estates, and who employed for this purpose the barbarous measures which were at that time used

in the army, believing that merciless corporal punishment was the only means of curing laziness, disorderliness and other vices. Thirdly, there were the absentees who lived beyond their means, and demanded from their steward, under pain of giving him or his son as a recruit, a much greater yearly sum than the estate could be reasonably expected to yield. Lastly, in the latter years of serfage, there were a number of men who bought estates as a mercantile speculation, and made as much money out of them as they could in the shortest possible space of time.

Of all hard masters, the last-named were the most terrible. Utterly indifferent to the welfare of the serfs and the ultimate fate of the property, they cut down the timber, sold the cattle, exacted heavy money dues under threats of giving the serfs or their children as recruits, presented to the military authorities a number of conscripts greater than was required by law—selling the conscription receipts (*zatchétniya kvitántsii*) to the merchants and burghers who were liable to the conscription but did not wish to serve—compelled some of the richer serfs to buy their liberty at an enormous price, and, in a word, used every means, legal and illegal, for extracting money. By this system of management they ruined the estate completely in the course of a few years; but by that time they had realised probably the whole sum paid, with a very fair profit from the operation; and this profit could be considerably augmented by selling a number of the peasant families for transportation to another estate (*na svoz*), or by mortgaging the property in the Opekúnski Sovêt—a Government institution which lent money on landed property without examining carefully the nature of the security.

As to the means which the proprietors possessed of oppressing their peasants, we must distinguish between the legal and the actual. The legal were almost as complete as anyone could desire. "The proprietor," it is said in the Laws (Vol. IX., § 1045, ed. an. 1857), "may impose on his serfs every kind of labour, may take from them money dues (*obrók*) and demand from them personal service, with this one restriction, that they should not be thereby ruined, and that the number of days fixed by law should be left to them

for their own work." * Besides this, he had the right to transform peasants into domestic servants, and might, instead of employing them in his own service, hire them out to others who had the rights and privileges of Noblesse (§ § 1047-48). For all offences committed against himself or against anyone under his jurisdiction he could subject the guilty ones to corporal punishment not exceeding forty lashes with the birch or fifteen blows with the stick (§ 1052); and if he considered any of his serfs as incorrigible he could have them drafted into the army or transported to Siberia, as he might desire (§ § 1053-55). In cases of insubordination, where the ordinary domestic means of discipline did not suffice, he could call in the police and the military to support his authority.

Such were the legal means by which the proprietor might oppress his peasants, and it will be readily understood that they were very considerable and very elastic. By law he had the power to impose any dues in labour or money which he might think fit, and in all cases the serfs were ordered to be docile and obedient (§ 1027). Corporal punishment, though restricted by law, he could in reality apply to any extent. Certainly none of the serfs, and very few of the proprietors, were aware that the law placed any restriction on this right. All the proprietors were in the habit of using corporal punishment as they thought proper, and unless a proprietor became notorious for inhuman cruelty, the authorities never thought of interfering. But in the eyes of the peasants, corporal punishment was not the worst. What they feared infinitely more than the birch or the stick was the proprietor's power of giving them or their sons as recruits. The law assumed that this extreme means would be employed only against those serfs who showed themselves incorrigibly vicious or insubordinate; but the authorities accepted those presented without making any investigations, and consequently the proprietor might use this power as an effective means of extortion.

Against these means of extortion and oppression the serfs

* I give here the references to the Code, because Russians commonly believe and assert that the hiring out of serfs, the infliction of corporal punishment, and similar practices were merely abuses unauthorised by law.

had no legal protection. The law provided them with no means of resisting any injustice to which they might be subjected, or of bringing to punishment the master who oppressed and ruined them. The Government, notwithstanding its sincere desire to protect them from inordinate burdens and cruel treatment, rarely interfered between the master and his serfs, being afraid of thereby undermining the authority of the proprietors, and awakening among the peasantry a spirit of insubordination. The serfs were left, therefore, to their own resources, and had to defend themselves as they best could. The simplest way was open mutiny; but this was rarely employed, for they knew by experience that any attempt of the kind would be at once put down by the military and mercilessly punished. Much more favourite and efficient methods were passive resistance, flight, and fire-raising or murder.

We might naturally suppose that an unscrupulous proprietor, armed with the enormous legal and actual power which I have just described, could very easily extort from his peasants anything he desired. In reality, however, the process of extortion, when it exceeded a certain measure, was a very difficult operation. The Russian peasant has a capacity of patient endurance that would do honour to a martyr, and a power of continued, dogged, passive resistance such as is possessed, I believe, by no other class of men in Europe; and these qualities formed a very powerful barrier against the rapacity of unconscientious proprietors. As soon as the serfs remarked in their master a tendency to rapacity and extortion, they at once took measures to defend themselves. Their first step was to sell secretly the live stock they did not actually require, and all their movable property, except the few articles necessary for everyday use; then the little capital so realised was carefully hidden.

When this had been effected, the proprietor might threaten and punish as he liked, but he rarely succeeded in unearthing the treasure. Many a peasant, under such circumstances, bore patiently the most cruel punishment, and saw his sons taken away as recruits, and yet he persisted in declaring that he had no money to ransom himself

and his children. A spectator in such a case would probably have advised him to give up his little store of money, and thereby liberate himself from persecution; but the peasants reasoned otherwise. They were convinced, and not without reason, that the sacrifice of their little capital would merely put off the evil day, and that the persecution would very soon recommence. In this way they would have to suffer as before, and have the additional mortification of feeling that they had spent to no purpose the little that they possessed. Their fatalistic belief in the "perhaps" (*avos'*) came here to their aid. Perhaps the proprietor might become weary of his efforts when he saw that they led to no result, or perhaps something might occur which would remove the persecutor.

It always happened, however, that when a proprietor treated his serfs with extreme injustice and cruelty, some of them lost patience, and sought refuge in flight. As the estates lay perfectly open on all sides, and it was utterly impossible to exercise a strict supervision, nothing was easier than to run away, and the fugitive might be a hundred miles off before his absence was noticed. But the oppressed serf was reluctant to adopt such an extreme measure. He had almost always a wife and family, and he could not possibly take them with him; flight, therefore, was expatriation for life in its most terrible form. Besides this, the life of a fugitive was by no means enviable. He was liable at any moment to fall into the hands of the police, and to be put in prison or sent back to his master. So little charm, indeed, did this life present that not infrequently after a few months or a few years the fugitive returned of his own accord to his former domicile.

Regarding fugitives or passportless wanderers in general, I may here remark parenthetically that there were two kinds. In the first place, there was the young, able-bodied peasant, who fled from the oppression of his master or from the conscription. Such a fugitive almost always sought out for himself a new domicile—generally in the southern provinces, where there was a great scarcity of labourers, and where many proprietors habitually welcomed all peasants who presented themselves, without making any inquiries as to

passports. In the second place, there were those who chose fugitivism as a permanent mode of life. These were, for the most part, men or women of a certain age—widowers or widows—who had no close family ties, and who were too infirm or too lazy to work. The majority of these assumed the character of pilgrims. As such they could always find enough to eat, and could generally even collect a few roubles with which to grease the palm of any zealous police-officer who might arrest them.

For a life of this kind Russia presented peculiar facilities. There was abundance of monasteries, where all comers could live for three days without questions being asked, and where those who were willing to do a little work for the patron saint might live for a much longer period. Then there were the towns, where the rich merchants considered almsgiving as very profitable for salvation. And, lastly, there were the villages, where a professing pilgrim was sure to be hospitably received and entertained so long as he refrained from stealing and other acts too grossly inconsistent with his assumed character. For those who contented themselves with simple fare, and did not seek to avoid the usual privations of a wanderer's life, these ordinary means of subsistence were amply sufficient. Those who were more ambitious and more cunning often employed their talents with great success in the world of the Old Ritualists and Sectarians.

The last and most desperate means of defence which the serfs possessed were fire-raising and murder. With regard to the amount of fire-raising there are no trustworthy statistics. With regard to the number of agrarian murders I once obtained some interesting statistical data, but unfortunately lost them. I may say, however, that these cases were not very numerous. This is to be explained in part by the patient, long-suffering character of the peasantry, and in part by the fact that the great majority of the proprietors were by no means such inhuman taskmasters as is sometimes supposed. When a case did occur, the Administration always made a strict investigation—punishing the guilty with exemplary severity, and taking no account of the provocation to which they had been subjected. The peasantry, on

the contrary—at least, when the act was not the result of mere personal vengeance—secretly sympathised with "the unfortunates," and long cherished their memory as that of men who had suffered for the *Mir*.

In speaking of the serfs I have hitherto confined my attention to the members of the *Mir*, or rural Commune—that is to say, the peasants in the narrower sense of the term; but besides these there were the *Dvoróvuye*, or domestic servants, and of these I must add a word or two.

The *Dvoróvuye* were domestic slaves rather than serfs in the proper sense of the term. Let us, however, avoid wounding unnecessarily Russian sensibilities by the use of the ill-sounding word. We may call the class in question "domestics"—remembering, of course, that they were not quite domestic servants in the ordinary sense. They received no wages, were not at liberty to change masters, possessed almost no legal rights, and might be punished, hired out, or sold by their owners without any infraction of the written law.

These "domestics" were very numerous—out of all proportion to the work to be performed—and could consequently lead a very lazy life;* but the peasant considered it a great misfortune to be transferred to their ranks, for he thereby lost his share of the Communal land and the little independence which he enjoyed. It very rarely happened, however, that the proprietor took an able-bodied peasant as domestic. The class generally kept up its numbers by the legitimate and illegitimate method of natural increase; and involuntary additions were occasionally made when orphans were left without near relatives, and no other family wished to adopt them. To this class belonged the lackeys, servant-girls, cooks, coachmen, stable-boys, gardeners, and a large number of nondescript old men and women who had no very clearly defined functions. If the proprietor had a private theatre or orchestra, it was from this class that the actors and musicians were drawn. Those of them who were married and had children occupied a position intermediate between the ordinary domestic servant and the peasant. On the one

* Those proprietors who kept orchestras, large packs of hounds, &c., had sometimes several hundred domestic serfs.

hand, they received from the master a monthly allowance of food and a yearly allowance of clothes, and they were obliged to live in the immediate vicinity of the mansion-house; but, on the other hand, they had each a separate house or apartment, with a little cabbage-garden, and commonly a small plot of flax. The unmarried ones lived in all respects like ordinary domestic servants.

The number of these domestic serfs being generally out of all proportion to the amount of work they had to perform, they were imbued with a hereditary spirit of indolence, and they performed lazily and carelessly what they had to do. On the other hand, they were often sincerely attached to the family they served, and occasionally proved by acts their fidelity and attachment. Here is an instance out of many for which I can vouch. An old nurse, whose mistress was dangerously ill, vowed that, in the event of the patient's recovery, she would make a pilgrimage, first to Kief, the Holy City on the Dnieper, and afterwards to Solovetsk, a much revered monastery on an island in the White Sea. The patient recovered, and the old woman, in fulfilment of her vow, walked more than two thousand miles!

This class of serfs might well be called domestic slaves, but I must warn the reader that he ought not to use the expression when speaking with Russians, because they are extremely sensitive on the point. Serfage, they say, was something quite different from slavery, and slavery never existed in Russia.

The first part of this assertion is perfectly true, and the second part perfectly false. In old times, as I have said above, slavery was a recognised institution in Russia as in other countries. One can hardly read a few pages of the old chronicles without stumbling on references to slaves; and I distinctly remember—though I cannot at this moment give chapter and verse—that one of the old Russian princes was so valiant and so successful in his wars that during his reign a slave might be bought for a few coppers. As late as the beginning of last century the domestic serfs were sold very much as domestic slaves used to be sold in countries where slavery was recognised as a legal institution. Here

is a specimen of the customary advertisements; I take it almost at random from the *Moscow Gazette* of 1801:—

TO BE SOLD:—Three coachmen, well trained and handsome; and two girls, the one eighteen and the other fifteen years of age, both of them good-looking, and well acquainted with various kinds of handiwork. In the same house there are for sale two hairdressers; the one, twenty-one years of age, can read, write, play on a musical instrument, and act as huntsman; the other can dress ladies' and gentlemen's hair. In the same house are sold pianos and organs.

A little farther on in the same number of the paper, a first-rate clerk, a carver, and a lackey are offered for sale, and the reason assigned is a superabundance of the articles in question (*za izlishestvom*). In some instances it seems as if the serfs and the cattle were intentionally put in the same category, as in the following announcement: "In this house one can buy a coachman and a Dutch cow about to calve." The style of these advertisements, and the frequent recurrence of the same addresses show that there was at this time in Moscow a regular class of slave-dealers. The humane Alexander I. prohibited advertisements of this kind, but he did not put down the custom which they represented, and his successor, Nicholas I., took no effective measures for its repression.

Of the whole number of serfs belonging to the proprietors, the domestics formed, according to the census of 1857, no less than 6¾ per cent. (6.79), and their numbers were evidently increasing rapidly, for in the preceding census they represented only 4.79 per cent. of the whole. This fact seems all the more significant when we observe that during this period the number of peasant serfs had diminished.

I must now bring this long chapter to an end. My aim has been to represent serfage in its normal, ordinary forms rather than in its occasional monstrous manifestations. Of these latter I have a collection containing ample materials for a whole series of sensation novels, but I refrain from quoting them, because I do not believe that the criminal annals of a country give a fair representation of its real condition. On the other hand, I do not wish to whitewash serfage or attenuate its evil consequences. No large body of men could long wield such enormous uncontrolled power

without abusing it,* and no great body of men could long live under such power without suffering morally and materially from its pernicious influence. If serfage did not create that moral apathy and intellectual lethargy which formed, as it were, the atmosphere of Russian provincial life, it did much at least to preserve it. In short, serfage was the chief barrier to all material and moral progress, and in a time of moral awakening such as that which I have described in the preceding chapter, the question of Emancipation naturally came at once to the front.

* The number of deposed proprietors—or rather the number of estates placed under curators in consequence of the abuse of authority on the part of their owners—amounted in 1859 to 215. So at least I found in an official MS. document shown to me by the late Nicholas Milútin.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS

It was a fundamental principle of Russian political organisation that all initiative in public affairs should proceed from the Autocratic Power. The widespread desire, therefore, for the Emancipation of the serfs did not find free expression so long as the Emperor kept silence regarding his intentions. The educated classes watched anxiously for some sign, and soon a sign was given to them. In March, 1856—a few days after the publication of the manifesto announcing the conclusion of peace with the Western Powers—his Majesty said to the Marshals of Noblesse in Moscow: "For the removal of certain unfounded reports I consider it necessary to declare to you that I have not at present the intention of annihilating serfage; but certainly, as you yourselves know, the existing manner of possessing serfs cannot remain unchanged. It is better to abolish serfage from above than to await the time when it will begin to abolish itself from below. I request you, gentlemen, to consider how this can be put into execution, and to submit my words to the Noblesse for their consideration."

This announcement was made with a view to ascertaining the sentiments of the landed proprietors and encouraging them to express themselves in favour of Emancipation, but it had not the desired effect. Abolitionist enthusiasm was rare among the great nobles, and those who really wished to see serfage abolished considered the Imperial utterance too vague and oracular to justify them in taking the initiative. As no further steps were taken for some time the excitement caused by the incident soon subsided, and many people assumed that the consideration of the problem had been indefinitely postponed. "The Government," it was said, "evidently intended to raise the question, but on

perceiving the indifference or hostility of the landed proprietors, it became frightened and drew back."

The Emperor was in reality disappointed. He had expected that his "faithful Moscow Noblesse," of which he was wont to say he was himself a member, would at once respond to his call, and that the ancient capital would have the honour of beginning the work. And if the example were thus given by Moscow he had no doubt that it would soon be followed by the other provinces. He now perceived that the fundamental principles on which the Emancipation should be effected must be laid down by the Government, and for this purpose he created a secret committee composed of several great officers of State.

This "Chief Committee for Peasant Affairs," as it was afterwards called, devoted six months to studying the history of the question. Emancipation schemes were by no means a new phenomenon in Russia. Ever since the time of Catherine II. the Government had thought of improving the condition of the serfs, and on more than one occasion a general Emancipation had been contemplated. In this way the question had slowly ripened, and certain fundamental principles had come to be pretty generally recognised. Of these principles the most important was that the State should not consent to any project which would uproot the peasant from the soil and allow him to wander about at will; for such a measure would render the collection of the taxes impossible, and in all probability produce the most frightful agrarian disorders. And to this general principle there was an important corollary: if severe restrictions were to be placed on free migration, it would be necessary to provide the peasantry with land in the immediate vicinity of the villages; otherwise they must inevitably fall back under the power of the proprietors, and a new and worse kind of serfage would thus be created. But in order to give land to the peasantry it would be necessary to take it from the proprietors; and this expropriation seemed to many a most unjustifiable infringement of the sacred rights of property. It was this consideration that had restrained the Emperor Nicholas from taking any decisive measures with regard to serfage; and it had now considerable weight with the

members of the committee, who were nearly all great land-owners.

Notwithstanding the strenuous exertions of the Grand Duke Constantine, who had been appointed a member for the express purpose of accelerating the proceedings, the committee did not show as much zeal and energy as was desired, and orders were given to take some decided step. At that moment a convenient opportunity presented itself.

In the Lithuanian Provinces, where the nobles were Polish by origin and sympathies, the miserable condition of the peasantry had induced the Government in the preceding reign to limit the arbitrary power of the serf-owners by so-called Inventories, in which the mutual obligations of masters and serfs were regulated and defined. These Inventories had caused great dissatisfaction, and the proprietors now proposed that they should be revised. Of this the Government determined to take advantage. On the somewhat violent assumption that these proprietors wished to emancipate their serfs, an Imperial rescript was prepared approving of their supposed desire, and empowering them to form committees for the preparation of definite projects.* In the rescript itself the word emancipation was studiously avoided, but there could be no doubt as to the implied meaning, for it was expressly stated in the supplementary considerations that "the abolition of serfage must be effected not suddenly, but gradually." Four days later the Minister of the Interior, in accordance with a secret order from the Emperor, sent a circular to the Governors and Marshals of Noblesse all over Russia Proper, informing them that the nobles of the Lithuanian Provinces "had recognised the necessity of liberating the peasants," and that "this noble intention" had afforded peculiar satisfaction to his Majesty. A copy of the rescript and the fundamental principles to be observed accompanied the circular, "in case the nobles of other provinces should express a similar desire."

This circular produced an immense sensation throughout the country. No one could for a moment misunderstand

* This celebrated document is known as "The Rescript to Nazímof." More than once in the course of conversation I did all in my power, within the limits of politeness and discretion, to extract from General Nazímof a detailed account of this important episode, but my efforts were unsuccessful.

the suggestion that the nobles of other provinces *might possibly* express a desire to liberate their serfs. Such vague words, when spoken by an autocrat, have a very definite and unmistakable meaning, which prudent loyal subjects have no difficulty in understanding. If any doubted, their doubts were soon dispelled, for the Emperor, a few weeks later, publicly expressed a hope that, with the help of God and the co-operation of the nobles, the work would be successfully accomplished.

The die was cast, and the Government looked anxiously to see the result.

The periodical Press—which was at once the product and fomenter of the liberal aspirations—hailed the raising of the question with boundless enthusiasm. The Emancipation, it was said, would certainly open a new and glorious epoch in the national history. Serfage was described as an ulcer that had long been poisoning the national blood; as an enormous weight under which the whole nation groaned; as an insurmountable obstacle, preventing all material and moral progress; as a cumbrous load, which rendered all free, vigorous action impossible, and prevented Russia from rising to the level of the Western nations. If Russia had succeeded in stemming the flood of adverse fortune in spite of this millstone round her neck, what might she not accomplish when free and untrammelled? All sections of the literary world had arguments to offer in support of the foregone conclusion. The moralists declared that all the prevailing vices were the product of serfage, and that moral progress was impossible in an atmosphere of slavery; the lawyers held that the arbitrary authority of the proprietors over the peasants had no legal basis; the economists explained that free labour was an indispensable condition of industrial and commercial prosperity; the philosophical historians showed that the normal historical development of the country demanded the immediate abolition of this superannuated remnant of barbarism; and the writers of the sentimental, gushing type poured forth endless effusions about brotherly love to the weak and the oppressed. In a word, the Press was for the moment unanimous, and displayed a feverish excitement which demanded a liberal use of superlatives.

This enthusiastic tone accorded perfectly with the feelings of a large section of the nobles. Nearly the whole of the Noblesse was more or less affected by the new-born enthusiasm for everything just, humanitarian, and liberal. The aspirations found, of course, their most ardent representatives among the educated youth; but they were by no means confined to the younger men, who had passed through the universities and had always regarded serfage as a stain on the national honour. Many a Saul was found among the prophets. Many an old man, with grey hairs and grandchildren, who had all his life placidly enjoyed the fruits of serf labour, was now heard to speak of serfage as an antiquated institution which could not be reconciled with modern humanitarian ideas; and not a few of all ages, who had formerly never thought of reading books or newspapers, now perused assiduously the periodical literature, and picked up the liberal and humanitarian phrases with which it was filled.

This Abolitionist fervour was considerably augmented by certain political aspirations which did not appear in the newspapers, but which were at that time very generally entertained. In spite of the Press censure a large section of the educated classes had become acquainted with the political literature of France and Germany, and had imbibed therefrom an unbounded admiration for Constitutional government. A Constitution, it was thought, would necessarily remove all political evils and create something like a political millennium. And it was not to be a Constitution of the ordinary sort—the fruit of compromise between hostile political parties—but an institution designed calmly according to the latest results of political science, and so constructed that all classes would voluntarily contribute to the general welfare. The necessary prelude to this happy era of political liberty was, of course, the abolition of serfage. When the nobles had given up their power over their serfs they would receive a Constitution as an indemnity and reward.

There were, however, many nobles of the old school who remained impervious to all these new feelings and ideas. On them the raising of the Emancipation question had a very different effect. They had no source of revenue but their

estates, and they could not conceive the possibility of working their estates without serf labour. If the peasant was indolent and careless even under strict supervision, what would he become when no longer under the authority of a master? If the profits from farming were already small, what would they be when no one would work without wages? And this was not the worst, for it was quite evident from the circular that the land question was to be raised, and that a considerable portion of each estate would be transferred, at least for a time, to the emancipated peasants.

To the proprietors who looked at the question in this way the prospect of Emancipation was certainly not at all agreeable, but we must not imagine that they felt as English landowners would feel if threatened by a similar danger. In England an hereditary estate has for the family a value far beyond what it would bring in the market. It is regarded as one and indivisible, and any dismemberment of it would be looked upon as a grave family misfortune. In Russia, on the contrary, estates have nothing of this semi-sacred character, and may be at any time dismembered without outraging family feeling or traditional associations. Indeed, it is not uncommon that when a proprietor dies, leaving only one estate and several children, the property is broken up into fractions and divided among the heirs. Even the prospect of pecuniary sacrifice did not alarm the Russians so much as it would alarm Englishmen. Men who keep no accounts and take little thought for the morrow are much less averse to making pecuniary sacrifices—whether for a wise or a foolish purpose—than those who carefully arrange their mode of life according to their income.

Still, after due allowance has been made for these peculiarities, it must be admitted that the feeling of dissatisfaction and alarm was very widespread. Even Russians do not like the prospect of losing a part of their land and income. No protest, however, was entered, and no opposition was made. Those who were hostile to the measure were ashamed to show themselves selfish and unpatriotic. At the same time they knew very well that the Emperor, if he wished, could effect the Emancipation in spite of them, and that resistance on their part would draw down upon

them the Imperial displeasure, without affording any compensating advantage. They knew, too, that there was a danger from below, so that any useless show of opposition would be like playing with matches in a powder-magazine. The serfs would soon hear that the Tsar desired to set them free, and they might, if they suspected that the proprietors were trying to frustrate the Tsar's benevolent intentions, use violent measures to get rid of the opposition. The idea of agrarian massacres had already taken possession of many timid minds. Besides this, all classes of the proprietors felt that if the work was to be done, it should be done by the Noblesse and not by the bureaucracy. If it were effected by the nobles the interests of the landowners would be duly considered, but if it were effected by the Administration without their concurrence and co-operation, their interests would be neglected, and there would inevitably be an enormous amount of jobbery and corruption. In accordance with this view the Noblesse corporations of the various provinces successively requested permission to form committees for the consideration of the question, and during the year 1858 a committee was opened in almost every province in which serfage existed.

In this way the question was apparently handed over for solution to the nobles, but in reality the Noblesse was called upon merely to advise, and not to legislate. The Government had not only laid down the fundamental principles of the scheme; it continually supervised the work of construction, and it reserved to itself the right of modifying or rejecting the projects proposed by the committees.

According to these fundamental principles the serfs should be emancipated gradually, so that for some time they would remain attached to the glebe and subject to the authority of the proprietors. During this transition period they should redeem by money payments or labour their houses and gardens, and enjoy in usufruct a certain quantity of land, sufficient to enable them to support themselves, and to fulfil their obligations to the State as well as to the proprietor.' In return for this land they should pay a yearly rent in money, produce, or labour, over and above the yearly sum paid for the redemption of their houses and gardens.

As to what should be done after the expiry of the transition period, the Government seems to have had no clearly conceived intentions. Probably it hoped that by that time the proprietors and their emancipated serfs would have invented some convenient *modus vivendi*, and that nothing but a little legislative regulation would be necessary. But radical legislation is like the letting-out of water. These fundamental principles, adopted at first with a view to mere immediate practical necessity, soon acquired a very different significance. To understand this we must return to the periodical literature.

Until the serf question came to be discussed, the reform aspirations were very vague, and consequently there was a remarkable unanimity among their representatives. The great majority of the educated classes were unanimously of opinion that Russia should at once adopt from the West all those liberal principles and institutions, the exclusion of which had prevented the country from rising to the level of the Western nations. But very soon symptoms of a schism became apparent. Whilst literature in general was still preaching the doctrine that Russia should adopt everything that was "liberal," a few voices began to be heard warning the unwary that much which bore the name of liberal was in reality already antiquated and worthless —that Russia ought not to follow blindly in the footsteps of other nations, but ought rather to profit by their experience, and avoid the errors into which they had fallen.

The chief of these errors was, according to these new teachers, the abnormal development of individualism—the adoption of that principle of *laissez faire* which forms the basis of what may be called the Orthodox School of Political Economists. Individualism and unrestricted competition, it was said, have now reached in the West an abnormal and monstrous development. Supported by the *laissez faire* principle, they have led—and must always lead—to the oppression of the weak, the tyranny of capital, the impoverishment of the masses for the benefit of the few, and the formation of a hungry, dangerous Proletariat! This has already been recognised by the most advanced thinkers of France and Germany. If the older countries cannot at

once cure those evils, that is no reason for Russia to inoculate herself with them. She is still at the commencement of her career, and it would be folly for her to wander voluntarily for ages in the Desert, when a direct route to the Promised Land has been already discovered.

In order to convey some idea of the influence which this teaching exercised, I must here recall, at the risk of repeating myself, what I said in a former chapter. The Russians, as I have there pointed out, have a peculiar way of treating political and social questions. Having received their political education from books, they naturally attribute to theoretical considerations an importance which seems to us exaggerated. When any important or trivial question arises, they at once launch into a sea of philosophical principles, and pay less attention to the little objects close at hand than to the big ones that appear on the distant horizon of the future. And when they set to work at any political reform they begin *ab ovo*. As they have no traditional prejudices to fetter them, and no traditional principles to lead them, they naturally take for their guidance the latest conclusions of political philosophy.

Bearing this in mind, let us see how it affected the Emancipation question. The Proletariat—described as a dangerous monster which was about to swallow up society in Western Europe, and which might at any moment cross the frontier unless kept out by vigorous measures—took possession of the popular imagination, and aroused the fears of the reading public. To many it seemed that the best means of preventing the formation of a Proletariat in Russia was the securing of land for the emancipated serfs, and the careful preservation of the rural Commune. "Now is the moment," it was said, "for deciding the important question whether Russia is to fall a prey, like the Western nations, to this terrible evil, or whether she is to protect herself for ever against it. In the decision of this question lies the future destiny of the country. If the peasants be emancipated without land, or if those Communal institutions, which give to every man a share of the soil and secure this inestimable boon for the generations still unborn, be now abolished, a Proletariat will be rapidly formed, and the peasantry will become a

disorganised mass of homeless wanderers like the English agricultural labourers. If, on the contrary, a fair share of land be granted to them, and if the Commune be made proprietor of the land ceded, the danger of a Proletariat is for ever removed, and Russia will thereby set an example to the civilised world! Never has a nation had such an opportunity of making an enormous leap forward on the road of progress, and never again will the opportunity occur. The Western nations have discovered their error when it is too late—when the peasantry have been already deprived of their land, and the labouring classes of the towns have already fallen a prey to the insatiable cupidity of the capitalists. In vain their most eminent thinkers warn and exhort. Ordinary remedies are no longer of any avail. But Russia may avoid these dangers, if she but act wisely and prudently in this matter. The peasants are still in actual, if not legal, possession of the land, and there is as yet no Proletariat in the towns. All that is necessary, therefore, is to abolish the arbitrary authority of the proprietors without expropriating the peasants, and without disturbing the existing Communal institutions, which form the best barrier against pauperism."

These ideas were warmly espoused by many proprietors, and exercised a very great influence on the deliberations of the Provincial Committees. In these committees there were generally two groups. The majorities, whilst making large concessions to the claims of justice and expediency, endeavoured to defend, as far as possible, the interests of their class; the minorities, though by no means indifferent to the interests of the class to which they belonged, allowed the more abstract theoretical considerations to be predominant. At first the majorities considered the fundamental principles laid down by the Government as much too favourable to the peasantry, and were inclined to protest; but when they perceived that public opinion, as represented by the Press, went much farther than the Government, they clung to these fundamental principles—which secured at least the fee simple of the estate to the landlord—as their anchor of safety. Between the two parties arose naturally a strong spirit of hostility, and the Government, which wished to have the

support of the minorities, found it advisable that both should present their projects for consideration.

As the Provincial Committees worked independently, there was considerable diversity in the conclusions at which they arrived. The task of codifying these conclusions, and elaborating out of them a general scheme of Emancipation, was entrusted to a special Imperial Commission, composed partly of officials and partly of landed proprietors named by the Emperor.* Those who believed that the question had really been handed over to the Noblesse assumed that this Commission would merely codify the materials presented by the Provincial Committees, and that the Emancipation Law would thereafter be elaborated by a National Assembly of deputies elected by the nobles. In reality the Commission, working in St. Petersburg under the direct guidance and control of the Government, fulfilled a very different and much more important function. Using the combined projects merely as a storehouse from which it could draw the proposals it required, it formed a new project of its own, which ultimately received, after undergoing modification in detail, the Imperial assent. Instead of being a mere *chancellerie*, as many expected, it became in a certain sense the author of the Emancipation Law.

There were, as we have seen, in nearly all the Provincial Committees a majority and a minority, the former of which strove to defend the interests of the proprietors, whilst the latter paid more attention to theoretical considerations, and endeavoured to secure for the peasantry a large amount of land and Communal self-government. In the Commission there were the same two parties, but their relative strength was very different. Here the men of theory, instead of forming a minority, were more numerous than their opponents, and enjoyed the support of the Government, which regulated the proceedings. In its instructions we see how much the question had ripened under the influence of the theoretical considerations. There is no longer any trace of the idea that the Emancipation should be gradual; on the contrary, it is expressly declared that the immediate effect of the law

* Known as the *Redaktsiónnaya Komissiya*, or Elaboration Commission. Strictly speaking there were two, but they are commonly spoken of as one.

should be the complete abolition of the proprietor's authority. There is even evidence of a clear intention of preventing the proprietor as far as possible from exercising any influence over his former serfs. The sharp distinction between the land occupied by the village and the arable land to be ceded in usufruct likewise disappears, and it is merely said that efforts should be made to enable the peasants to become proprietors of the land they required.

The aim of the Government had thus become clear and well defined. The task to be performed was to transform the serfs at once, and with the least possible disturbance of the existing economic conditions, into a class of small Communal proprietors—that is to say, a class of free peasants possessing a house and a garden, and a share of the Communal land. To effect this it was merely necessary to declare the serf personally free, to draw a clear line of demarcation between the Communal land and the rest of the estate, and to determine the price or rent which should be paid for this Communal property, inclusive of the land on which the village was built.

The law was prepared in strict accordance with these principles. As to the amount of land to be ceded, it was decided that the existing arrangements, founded on experience, should, as a general rule, be preserved—in other words, the land actually enjoyed by the peasants should be retained by them; and in order to prevent extreme cases of injustice, a maximum and a minimum were fixed for each district. In like manner, as to the dues, it was decided that the existing arrangements should be taken as the basis of the calculation, but that the sum should be modified according to the amount of land ceded. At the same time facilities were to be given for the transforming of the labour dues into yearly money payments, and for enabling the peasants to redeem them, with the assistance of the Government in the form of credit.

This idea of redemption created, at first, a feeling of alarm among the proprietors. It was bad enough to be obliged to cede a large part of the estates in usufruct, but it seemed to be much worse to have to sell it. Redemption appeared to be a species of wholesale confiscation. But very soon it became evident that the redeeming of the land was

profitable for both parties. Cession in perpetual usufruct was felt to be in reality tantamount to alienation of the land, whilst the immediate redemption would enable the proprietors, who had generally little or no ready money, to pay their debts, to clear their estates from mortgages, and to make the outlays necessary for the transition to free labour. The majority of the proprietors, therefore, said openly: "Let the Government give us a suitable compensation in money for the land that is taken away from us, so that we may be at once freed from all further trouble and annoyance."

When it became known that the Commission was not merely arranging and codifying the materials, but elaborating a law of its own and regularly submitting its decisions for Imperial confirmation, a feeling of dissatisfaction appeared all over the country. The nobles perceived that the question was being taken out of their hands, and was being solved by a small body composed of bureaucrats and nominees of the Government. After having made a voluntary sacrifice of their rights, they were being unceremoniously pushed aside! They had still, however, the means of correcting this. The Emperor had publicly promised that before the project should become law, deputies from the Provincial Committees should be summoned to St. Petersburg to make objections and propose amendments.

The Commission and the Government would have willingly dispensed with all further advice from the nobles, but it was necessary to redeem the Imperial promise. Deputies were therefore summoned to the capital, but they were not allowed to form, as they hoped, a public assembly for the discussion of the question. All their efforts to hold meetings were frustrated, and they were required merely to answer in writing a list of printed questions regarding matters of detail. The fundamental principles, they were told, had already received the Imperial sanction, and were consequently removed from discussion. Those who desired to discuss details were invited individually to attend meetings of the Commission, where they found one or two members ready to engage with them in a little dialectical fencing. This, of course, did not give much satisfaction. Indeed, the ironical tone in which the fencing was too often conducted

served to increase the existing irritation. It was only too evident that the Commission had triumphed, and some of the members could justly boast that they had drowned the deputies in ink and buried them under reams of paper.

Believing, or at least professing to believe, that the Emperor was being deceived in this matter by the Administration, several groups of deputies presented petitions to his Majesty containing a respectful protest against the manner in which they had been treated. But by this act they simply laid themselves open to "the most unkindest cut of all." Those who had signed the petitions received a formal reprimand through the police!

This treatment of the deputies, and, above all, this gratuitous insult, produced among the nobles a storm of indignation. They felt that they had been entrapped! The Government had artfully induced them to form projects for the emancipation of their serfs, and now, after having been used as a cat's-paw in the work of their own spoliation, they were being unceremoniously pushed aside as no longer necessary! Those who had indulged in the hope of gaining political rights felt the blow most keenly. A first gentle and respectful attempt at remonstrance had been answered by a dictatorial reprimand through the police! Instead of being called to take an active part in home and foreign politics, they were being treated as naughty schoolboys. In view of this insult all differences of opinion were for the moment forgotten, and all parties resolved to join in a vigorous protest against the insolence and arbitrary conduct of the bureaucracy.

A convenient opportunity of making this protest in a legal way was offered by the triennial Provincial Assemblies of the Noblesse about to be held in several provinces. So at least it was thought, but here again the Noblesse was checkmated by the Administration. Before the opening of the Assemblies a circular was issued excluding the Emancipation question from their deliberations. Some Assemblies evaded this order, and succeeded in making a little demonstration by submitting to his Majesty that the time had arrived for other reforms, such as the separation of the administrative and judicial powers, and the creation of local

self-government, public judicial procedure, and trial by jury.

All these reforms were voluntarily effected by the Emperor a few years later, but the manner in which they were suggested seemed to savour of insubordination, and was a flagrant infraction of the principle that all initiative in public affairs should proceed from the central Government. New measures of repression were accordingly used. Some Marshals of Noblesse were reprimanded and others deposed. Of the conspicuous leaders, two were exiled to distant provinces and others placed under the supervision of the police. Worst of all, the whole agitation strengthened the Commission by convincing the Emperor that the majority of the nobles were hostile to his benevolent plans.*

When the Commission had finished its labours, its proposals passed to the two higher instances—the Committee for Peasant Affairs and the Council of State—and in both of these the Emperor declared plainly that he could allow no fundamental changes. From all the members he demanded a complete forgetfulness of former differences and a conscientious execution of his orders; "for you must remember," he significantly added, "that in Russia laws are made by the Autocratic Power." From an historical review of the question he drew the conclusion that "the Autocratic Power created serfage, and the Autocratic Power ought to abolish it." On March 3rd (February 19th, old style), 1861, the law was signed, and by that act more than 20,000,000 serfs were liberated.† A Manifesto containing the fundamental principles of the law was at once sent all over the country, and an order was given that it should be read in all the churches.

* This was a misinterpretation of the facts. Very many of those who joined in the protest sincerely sympathised with the idea of Emancipation, and were ready to be even more "liberal" than the Government.

† It is sometimes said that 40,000,000 serfs have been emancipated. The statement is true, if we regard the State Peasants as serfs. They held, as I have already explained, an intermediate position between serfage and freedom. The peculiar administration under which they lived was partly abolished by Imperial Orders of September 7th, 1859, and October 23rd, 1861. In 1866 they were placed, as regards administration, on a level with the emancipated serfs of the proprietors. As a general rule, they received rather more land and had to pay somewhat lighter dues than the emancipated serfs in the narrower sense of the term.

The three fundamental principles laid down by the law were:—

1. That the serfs should at once receive the civil rights of the free rural classes, and that the authority of the proprietor should be replaced by Communal self-government.

2. That the rural Communes should as far as possible retain the land they actually held, and should in return pay to the proprietor certain yearly dues in money or labour.

3. That the Government should by means of credit assist the Communes to redeem these dues, or, in other words, to purchase the lands ceded to them in usufruct.

With regard to the domestic serfs, it was enacted that they should continue to serve their masters during two years, and that thereafter they should be completely free, but they should have no claim to a share of the land.

It might be reasonably supposed that the serfs received with boundless gratitude and delight the Manifesto proclaiming these principles. Here at last was the realisation of their long-cherished hopes. Liberty was accorded to them; and not only liberty, but a goodly portion of the soil—about half of all the arable land possessed by the proprietors.

In reality the Manifesto created among the peasantry a feeling of disappointment rather than delight. To understand this strange fact we must endeavour to place ourselves at the peasant's point of view.

In the first place it must be remarked that all vague, rhetorical phrases about free labour, human dignity, national progress, and the like, which may readily produce among educated men a certain amount of temporary enthusiasm, fall on the ears of the Russian peasant like drops of rain on a granite rock. The fashionable rhetoric of philosophical liberalism is as incomprehensible to him as the flowery circumlocutionary style of an Oriental scribe would be to a keen City merchant. The idea of liberty in the abstract and the mention of rights which lie beyond the sphere of his ordinary everyday life awaken no enthusiasm in his breast. And for mere names he has a profound indifference. What matters it to him that he is officially called, not a "serf," but a "free village-inhabitant," if the change in official terminology is not accompanied by some immediate material

advantage? What he wants is a house to live in, food to eat, and raiment wherewithal to be clothed, and to gain these first necessaries of life with as little labour as possible.

He looked at the question exclusively from two points of view—that of historical right and that of material advantage—and from both of these the Emancipation Law seemed to him very unsatisfactory.

On the subject of historical right the peasantry had their own traditional conceptions, which were completely at variance with the written law. According to the positive legislation the Communal land formed part of the estate, and consequently belonged to the proprietor; but according to the conceptions of the peasantry it belonged to the Commune, and the right of the proprietor consisted merely in that personal authority over the serfs which had been conferred on him by the Tsar. The peasants could not, of course, put these conceptions into a strict legal form, but they often expressed them in their own homely laconic way by saying to their master, "Mui vashi no zemlyá nasha"—that is to say, "We are yours, but the land is ours." And it must be admitted that this view, though legally untenable, had a certain historical justification.* In old times the nobles had held their land by feudal tenure, and were liable to be ejected as soon as they did not fulfil their obligations to the State. These obligations had long since been abolished, and the feudal tenure transformed into an unconditional right of property, but the peasants clung to the old ideas in a way that strikingly illustrates the vitality of deep-rooted popular conceptions. In their minds the proprietors were merely temporary occupants, who were allowed by the Tsar to exact labour and dues from the serfs. What, then, was Emancipation? Certainly the abolition of all obligatory labour and money dues, and perhaps the complete ejectment of the proprietors. On this latter point there was a difference of opinion. All assumed, as a matter of course, that the Communal land would remain the property of the Commune, but it was not so clear what would be done with the rest of the estate. Some thought that it would be retained by

* See preceding chapter.

the proprietor, but very many believed that *all* the land would be given to the Communes. In this way the Emancipation would be in accordance with historical right and with the material advantage of the peasantry, for whose exclusive benefit, it was assumed, the reform had been undertaken.

Instead of this the peasants found that they were still to pay dues, even for the Communal land which they regarded as unquestionably their own! So at least said the expounders of the law. But the thing was incredible. Either the proprietors must be concealing or misinterpreting the law, or this was merely a preparatory measure, which would be followed by the real Emancipation. Thus were awakened among the peasantry a spirit of mistrust and suspicion and a widespread belief that there would be a second Imperial Manifesto, by which all the land would be divided and all the dues abolished.

On the nobles the Manifesto made a very different impression. The fact that they were to be entrusted with the putting of the law into execution, and the flattering allusions made to the spirit of generous self-sacrifice which they had exhibited, kindled amongst them enthusiasm enough to make them forget for a time their just grievances and their hostility towards the bureaucracy. They found that the conditions on which the Emancipation was effected were by no means so ruinous as they had anticipated; and the Emperor's appeal to their generosity and patriotism made many of them throw themselves with ardour into the important task confided to them.

Unfortunately they could not at once begin the work. The law had been so hurried through the last stages that the preparations for putting it into execution were by no means complete when the Manifesto was published. The task of regulating the future relations between the proprietors and the peasantry was entrusted to local proprietors in each district, who were to be called Arbiters of the Peace (*Mirovuiye Posrédniki*); but three months elapsed before these Arbiters could be appointed. During that time there was no one to explain the law to the peasants and settle the disputes between them and the proprietors; and the

consequence of this was that many cases of insubordination and disorder occurred. The muzhik naturally imagined that, as soon as the Tsar said he was free, he was no longer obliged to work for his old master—that all obligatory labour ceased as soon as the Manifesto was read. In vain the proprietor endeavoured to convince him that, in regard to labour, the old relations must continue, as the law enjoined, until a new arrangement had been made. To all explanations and exhortations he turned a deaf ear, and to the efforts of the rural police he too often opposed a dogged, passive resistance. In many cases the simple appearance of the higher authorities sufficed to restore order, for the presence of one of the Tsar's servants convinced many that the order to work for the present as formerly was not a mere invention of the proprietors. But not unfrequently the birch had to be applied. Indeed, I am inclined to believe, from the numerous descriptions of this time which I received from eye-witnesses, that rarely, if ever, had the serfs seen and experienced so much flogging as during these first three months after their liberation. Sometimes even the troops had to be called out, and on three occasions they fired on the peasants with ball cartridge. In the most serious case, where a young peasant had set up for a prophet and declared that the Emancipation Law was a forgery, fifty-one peasants were killed and seventy-seven were more or less seriously wounded.

In spite of these lamentable incidents, there was nothing which even the most violent alarmist could dignify with the name of an insurrection. Nowhere was there anything that could be called organised resistance. Even in the case above alluded to, the three thousand peasants on whom the troops fired were entirely unarmed, made no attempt to resist, and dispersed in the utmost haste as soon as they discovered that they were being shot down. Had the military authorities shown a little more judgment, tact and patience, the history of the Emancipation would not have been stained even with those three cases of unnecessary bloodshed.

This interregnum between the eras of serfage and liberty was brought to an end by the appointment of the Arbiters of

the Peace. Their first duty was to explain the law, and to organise the new peasant self-government. The lowest instance or primary organ of this self-government, the rural Commune, already existed, and at once recovered much of its ancient vitality as soon as the authority and interference of the proprietors were removed. The second instance, the *Vólost*—a territorial administrative unit comprising several contiguous Communes—had to be created, for nothing of the kind had previously existed on the estates of the nobles. It had existed, however, for nearly a quarter of a century among the peasants of the Domains, and it was therefore necessary merely to copy an existing model.

As soon as all the Vólosts in his district had been thus organised, the Arbiter had to undertake the much more arduous task of regulating the agrarian relations between the proprietors and the Communes—with the individual peasants, be it remembered, the proprietors had no direct relations whatever. It had been enacted by the law that the future agrarian relations between the two parties should be left, as far as possible, to voluntary contract; and accordingly each proprietor was invited to come to an agreement with the Commune or Communes on his estate. On the ground of this agreement a statute-charter (*ustávnaya grámota*) was prepared, specifying the number of male serfs, the quantity of land actually enjoyed by them, any proposed changes in this amount, the dues to be levied, and other details. If the Arbiter found that the conditions were in accordance with the law and clearly understood by the peasants, he confirmed the charter, and the arrangement was complete. When the two parties could not come to an agreement within a year, he prepared a charter according to his own judgment, and presented it for confirmation to the higher authorities.

The dissolution of partnership, if it be allowable to use such a term, between the proprietor and his serfs was sometimes very easy and sometimes very difficult. On many estates the charter did little more than legalise the existing arrangements, but in many instances it was necessary to add to, or subtract from, the amount of Communal land, and sometimes it was even necessary to remove the village to

another part of the estate. In all cases there were, of course, conflicting interests and complicated questions, so that the Arbiter had always abundance of difficult work. Besides this, he had to act as mediator in those differences which naturally arose during the transition period, when the authority of the proprietor had been abolished but the separation of the two classes had not yet been effected. The unlimited patriarchal authority which had been formerly wielded by the proprietor or his steward now passed with certain restrictions into the hands of the Arbiters, and these peacemakers had to spend a great part of their time in driving about from one estate to another to put an end to alleged cases of insubordination—some of which, it must be admitted, existed only in the imagination of the proprietors.

At first the work of amicable settlement proceeded slowly. The proprietors generally showed a conciliatory spirit, and some of them generously proposed conditions much more favourable to the peasants than the law demanded; but the peasants were filled with vague suspicions, and feared to commit themselves by "putting pen to paper." Even the highly respected proprietors, who imagined that they possessed the unbounded confidence of the peasantry, were suspected like the others, and their generous offers were regarded as well-baited traps. Often I have heard old men, sometimes with tears in their eyes, describe the distrust and ingratitude of the muzhik at this time. Many peasants still believed that the proprietors were hiding the real Emancipation Law, and imaginative or ill-intentioned persons fostered this belief by professing to know what the real law contained. The most absurd rumours were afloat, and whole villages sometimes acted upon them. In the province of Moscow, for instance, one Commune sent a deputation to the proprietor to inform him that, as he had always been a good master, the *Mir* would allow him to retain his house and garden during his lifetime. In another locality it was rumoured that the Tsar sat daily on a golden throne in the Crimea, receiving all peasants who came to him, and giving them as much land as they desired; and in order to take advantage of the Imperial liberality a large body of peasants

set out for the place indicated, and had to be stopped by the military!

As an illustration of the illusions in which the peasantry indulged at this time, I may mention here one of the many characteristic incidents related to me by gentlemen who had served as Arbiters of the Peace.

In the province of Riazán there was one Commune which had acquired a certain local notoriety for the obstinacy with which it refused all arrangements with the proprietor. My informant, who was Arbiter for the locality, was at last obliged to make a statute-charter for it without its consent. He wished, however, that the peasants should voluntarily accept the arrangement he proposed, and accordingly called them together to talk with them on the subject. After explaining fully the part of the law which related to their case, he asked them what objection they had to making a fair contract with their old master. For some time he received no answer, but gradually by questioning individuals he discovered the cause of their obstinacy: they were firmly convinced that not only the Communal land, but also the rest of the estate, belonged to them. To eradicate this false idea he set himself to reason with them, and the following characteristic dialogue ensued:—

Arbiter: "If the Tsar gave all the land to the peasantry, what compensation could he give to the proprietors to whom the land belongs?"

Peasant: "The Tsar will give them salaries according to their service."

Arbiter: "In order to pay these salaries he would require a great deal more money. Where could he get that money? He would have to increase the taxes, and in that way you would have to pay all the same."

Peasant: "The Tsar can make as much money as he likes."

Arbiter: "If the Tsar can make as much money as he likes, why does he make you pay the poll-tax every year?"

Peasant: "It is not the Tsar that receives the taxes we pay."

Arbiter: "Who, then, receives them?"

Peasant (after a little hesitation, and with a knowing smile): "The officials, of course!"

Gradually, through the efforts of the Arbiters, the peasants came to know better their real position, and the work began to advance more rapidly. But soon it was checked by another influence. By the end of the first year the "liberal," patriotic enthusiasm of the nobles had cooled. The sentimental, idyllic tendencies had melted away at the first touch of reality, and those who had imagined that liberty would have an immediately salutary effect on the moral character of the serfs confessed themselves disappointed. Many complained that the peasants showed themselves greedy and obstinate, stole wood from the forest, allowed their cattle to wander on the proprietors' fields, failed to fulfil their legal obligations, and broke their voluntary engagements. At the same time the fears of an agrarian rising subsided, so that even the timid were tranquillised. From these causes the conciliatory spirit of the proprietors decreased.

The work of conciliating and regulating became consequently more difficult, but the great majority of the Arbiters showed themselves equal to the task, and displayed an impartiality, tact, and patience beyond all praise. To them Russia is in great part indebted for the peaceful character of the Emancipation. Had they sacrificed the general good to the interests of their class, or had they habitually acted in that stern, administrative, military spirit which caused the instances of bloodshed above referred to, the prophecies of the alarmists would, in all probability, have been realised, and the historian of the Emancipation would have had a terrible list of judicial massacres to record. Fortunately they played the part of mediators, as their name signified, rather than that of administrators in the bureaucratic sense of the term, and they were animated with a just and humane rather than a merely legal spirit. Instead of simply laying down the law, and ordering their decisions to be immediately executed, they were ever ready to spend hours in trying to conquer, by patient and laborious reasoning, the unjust claims of proprietors or the false conceptions and ignorant obstinacy of the peasants. It was a new spectacle for Russia

to see a public function fulfilled by conscientious men who had their heart in their work, who sought neither promotion nor decorations, and who paid less attention to the punctilious observance of prescribed formalities than to the real objects in view.

There were, it is true, a few Arbiters to whom this description does not apply. Some of these were unduly under the influence of the feelings and conceptions created by serfage. Some, on the contrary, erred on the other side. Desirous of securing the future welfare of the peasantry and of gaining for themselves a certain kind of popularity, and at the same time animated with a violent spirit of pseudo-liberalism, these latter occasionally forgot that their duty was to be, not generous, but just, and that they had no right to practise generosity at other people's expense. All this I am quite aware of—I could even name one or two Arbiters who were guilty of positive dishonesty—but I hold that these were rare exceptions. The great majority did their duty faithfully and well.

The work of concluding contracts for the redemption of the dues, or, in other words, for the purchase of the land ceded in perpetual usufruct, proceeded slowly. The arrangement was as follows:—The dues were capitalised at 6 per cent., and the Government paid at once to the proprietors four-fifths of the whole sum. The peasants were to pay to the proprietor the remaining fifth, either at once or in instalments, and to the Government 6 per cent. for forty-nine years on the sum advanced. The proprietors willingly adopted this arrangement, for it provided them with a sum of ready money, and freed them from the difficult task of collecting the dues. But the peasants did not show much desire to undertake the operation. Some of them still expected a second emancipation, and those who did not take this possibility into their calculations were little disposed to make present sacrifices for distant prospective advantages which would not be realised for half a century.

In most cases the proprietor was obliged to remit, in whole or in part, the fifth to be paid by the peasants. Many Communes refused to undertake the operation on any conditions, and in consequence of this not a few proprietors

demanded the so-called obligatory redemption, according to which they accepted the four-fifths from the Government as full payment, and the operation was thus effected without the peasants being consulted. The total number of *male* serfs emancipated was about 9,750,000,* and of these, only about 7,250,000 had, at the beginning of 1875, made redemption contracts. Of the contracts signed at that time, about 63 per cent. were "obligatory." In 1887 the redemption was made obligatory for both parties, and in 1905 the redemption-dues were remitted by the Emperor, so that the rural Communes became full proprietors of the land previously held in perpetual usufruct.

The serfs were thus not only liberated, but also made Communal proprietors, and the old Communal institutions were preserved and developed. In answer to the question, Who effected this gigantic reform? we may say that the chief merit undoubtedly belongs to Alexander II. Had he not possessed a very great amount of courage he would neither have raised the question nor allowed it to be raised by others, and had he not shown a great deal more decision and energy than was expected, the solution would have been indefinitely postponed. Among the members of his own family he found an able and energetic assistant in his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, and a warm sympathiser with the cause in the Grand Duchess Helena, a German Princess, thoroughly devoted to the welfare of her adopted country. But we must not overlook the important part played by the nobles. Their conduct was very characteristic. As soon as the question was raised, a large number of them adopted the liberal ideas with enthusiasm; and as soon as it became evident that emancipation was inevitable, all made a holocaust of their ancient rights, and demanded to be liberated at once from all relations with their serfs. Moreover, when the law was passed, it was the proprietors who faithfully put it into execution. Lastly, we should remember that praise is due to the peasantry for their patience under disappointment, and for their orderly conduct as soon as they understood the law and recognised it to be the will of the Tsar. Thus it may justly be said that the Emancipation was not the work of

* This does not include the domestic serfs, who did not receive land.

one man, or one party, or one class, but of the nation as a whole.*

* The names most commonly associated with the Emancipation are General Rostóftsev, Lanskói (Minister of the Interior), Nicholas Milútin, Prince Tcherkassky, Samárin, Koshelév. Many others, such as I. A. Soloviév, Zhukóvski, Domontóvitch, Giers—brother of M. Giers, afterwards Minister for Foreign Affairs—are less known, but did valuable work. To all of these, with the exception of the first two, who died before my arrival in Russia, I have to confess my obligations. The late Nicholas Milútin rendered me special service by putting at my disposal not only all the official papers in his possession, but also many documents of a private kind.

CHAPTER XXX

THE LANDED PROPRIETORS SINCE THE EMANCIPATION

WHEN the Emancipation question was raised there was a considerable diversity of opinion as to the effect which the abolition of serfage would have on the material interests of the two classes directly concerned. The Press and "the young generation" took an optimistic view, and endeavoured to prove that the proposed change would be beneficial alike to proprietors and to peasants. Science, it was said, has long since decided that free labour is immensely more productive than slavery or serfage, and the principle has been already proved to demonstration in the countries of Western Europe. In all those countries modern agricultural progress began with the emancipation of the serfs, and increased productivity was everywhere the immediate result of improvements in the methods of culture. Thus the poor, light soils of Germany, France, and Holland have been made to produce more than the vaunted "black earth" of Russia. And from these ameliorations the landowning class has everywhere derived the chief advantages. Are not the landed proprietors of England—the country in which serfage was first abolished—the richest in the world? And is not the proprietor of a few hundred *morgen* in Germany often richer than the Russian noble who has thousands of *dessyatins?*

By these and similar plausible arguments the Press endeavoured to prove to the proprietors that they ought, even in their own interest, to undertake the emancipation of the serfs. Many proprietors, however, showed little faith in the abstract principles of political economy and the vague teachings of history as interpreted by the contemporary periodical literature. They could not always refute the ingenious arguments adduced by the men of more sanguine temperament, but they felt convinced that their prospects were not nearly so bright as these men represented them to

be. They believed that Russia was a peculiar country, and the Russians a peculiar people. The lower classes in England, France, Holland, and Germany were well known to be laborious and enterprising, while the Russian peasant was notoriously lazy, and would certainly, if left to himself, not do more work than was absolutely necessary to keep him from starving. Free labour might be more profitable than serfage in countries where the upper classes possessed traditional practical knowledge and abundance of capital, but in Russia the proprietors had neither the practical knowledge nor the ready money necessary to make the proposed ameliorations in the system of agriculture. To all this it was added that a system of emancipation by which the peasants should receive land and be made completely independent of the landed proprietors had nowhere been tried on such a large scale.

There were thus two diametrically opposite opinions regarding the economic results of the abolition of serfage, and we have now to examine which of these two opinions has been confirmed by experience.

Let us look at the question first from the point of view of the landowners.

The reader who has never attempted to make investigations of this kind may naturally imagine that the question can be easily decided by simply consulting a large number of individual proprietors, and drawing a general conclusion from their evidence. In reality I found the task much more difficult. After roaming about the country for five years (1870-75), collecting information from the best available sources, I hesitated to draw any sweeping conclusions, and my state of mind at that time was naturally reflected in the early editions of this work. As a rule the proprietors could not state clearly how much they had lost or gained, and when definite information was obtained from them, it was not always trustworthy. In the time of serfage very few of them had been in the habit of keeping accurate accounts, or accounts of any kind, and when they lived on their estates there were a very large number of items which could not possibly be reduced to figures. Of course, each proprietor had a general idea as to whether his position was better or

worse than it had been in the old times, but the vague statements made by individuals regarding their former and their actual revenues had little or no scientific value. So many considerations which had nothing to do with purely agrarian relations entered into the calculations that the conclusions did not help me much to estimate the economic results of the Emancipation as a whole.

Nor, it must be confessed, was the testimony by any means always unbiased. Not a few spoke of the great reform in an epic or dithyrambic tone, and among these I easily distinguished two categories: the one desired to prove that the measure was a complete success in every way, and that all classes were benefited by it, not only morally, but also materially; whilst the others strove to represent the proprietors in general, and themselves in particular, as the self-sacrificing victims of a great and necessary patriotic reform—as martyrs in the cause of liberty and progress. I do not for a moment suppose that these two groups of witnesses had a clearly conceived intention of deceiving or misleading, but as a cautious investigator I had to make allowance for their idealising and sentimental tendencies.

Since that time the situation has become much clearer, and during recent visits to Russia I have been able to arrive at much more definite conclusions. These I now proceed to communicate to the reader.

The Emancipation caused the proprietors of all classes to pass through a severe economic crisis. Periods of transition always involve much suffering, and the amount of suffering is generally in the inverse ratio of the precautions taken beforehand. In Russia the precautions had been neglected. Not one proprietor in a hundred had made any serious preparations for the inevitable change. On the eve of the Emancipation there were about 10,000,000 of male serfs on private properties, and of these nearly 7,000,000 remained under the old system of paying their dues in labour. Of course, everybody knew that Emancipation must come sooner or later, but forethought, prudence, and readiness to take time by the forelock are not among the prominent traits of the Russian character. Hence most of the landowners were taken unawares. But while all suffered, there were

differences of degree. Some were completely shipwrecked. So long as serfage existed all the relations of life were ill-defined and extremely elastic, so that a man who was hopelessly insolvent might contrive, with very little effort, to keep his head above water for half a lifetime. For such men the Emancipation, like a crisis in the commercial world, brought a day of reckoning. It did not really ruin them, but it showed them and the world at large that they were ruined, and they could no longer continue their old mode of life. For others the crisis was merely temporary. These emerged with a larger income than they ever had before, but I am not prepared to say that their material condition has improved, because the social habits have changed, the cost of living has become much greater, and the work of administering estates is incomparably more complicated and laborious than in the old patriarchal times.

We may greatly simplify the problem by reducing it to two definite questions:—

1. How far were the proprietors *directly* indemnified for the loss of serf labour and for the transfer in perpetual usufruct of a large part of their estates to the peasantry?

2. What have the proprietors done with the remainder of their estates, and how far have they been *indirectly* indemnified by the economic changes which have taken place since the Emancipation?

With the first of these questions I shall deal very briefly, because it is a controversial subject involving very complicated calculations which only a specialist can understand. The conclusion at which I have arrived, after much patient research, is that in most provinces the compensation was inadequate, and this conclusion is confirmed by excellent native authorities. M. Bekhteyev, for example, one of the most laborious and conscientious investigators in this field of research, and the author of an admirable work on the economic results of the Emancipation,* told me recently, in course of conversation, that in his opinion the peasant dues fixed by the Emancipation Law represented, throughout the Black-Earth Zone, only about a half of the value of the labour previously supplied by the serfs. To this I must add that

* "Khozaistvenniye Itogi istekshago Sorokolêtiya." St. Petersburg, 1902.

the compensation was in reality not nearly so great as it seemed to be according to the terms of the law. As the proprietors found it extremely difficult to collect the dues from the emancipated serfs, and as they required a certain amount of capital to reorganise the estate on the new basis of free labour, most of them were practically compelled to demand the obligatory redemption of the land (*obiazátelny vuíkup*), and in adopting this expedient they had to make considerable sacrifices. Not only had they to accept as full payment four-fifths of the normal sum, but of this amount the greater portion was paid in Treasury bonds, which fell at once to 80 per cent. of their nominal value.

Let us now pass to the second part of the problem: What have the proprietors done with the part of their estates which remained to them after ceding the required amount of land to the Communes? Have they been indirectly indemnified for the loss of serf labour by subsequent economic changes? How far have they succeeded in making the transition from serfage to free labour, and what revenues do they now derive from their estates? The answer to these questions will necessarily contain some account of the present economic position of the proprietors.

On all proprietors the Emancipation had at least one good effect: it dragged them forcibly from the old path of indolence and routine, and compelled them to think and calculate regarding their affairs. The hereditary listlessness and apathy, the traditional habit of looking on the estate with its serfs as a kind of self-acting machine which must always spontaneously supply the owner with the means of living, the inveterate practice of spending all ready money, and of taking little heed for the morrow—all this, with much that resulted from it, was rudely swept away and became a thing of the past. The broad, easy road on which the proprietors had hitherto let themselves be borne along by the force of circumstances suddenly split up into a number of narrow, arduous, thorny paths. Each one had to use his judgment to determine which of the paths he should adopt, and, having made his choice, he had to struggle along as he best could. I remember once asking a proprietor what effect the Emancipation had had on the class to which he

belonged, and he gave me an answer which is worth recording. "Formerly," he said, "we kept no accounts and drank champagne; now we keep accounts and content ourselves with *kvass*." Like all epigrammatic sayings, this laconic reply is far from giving a complete description of reality, but it indicates in a graphic way a change that has unquestionably taken place. As soon as serfage was abolished it was no longer possible to live like "the flowers of the field." Many a proprietor who had formerly vegetated in apathetic ease had to ask himself the question: How am I now to gain a living? All had to consider what was the most profitable way of employing the land that remained to them.

The ideal solution of the problem was that as soon as the peasant-land had been demarcated, the proprietor should take to farming the remainder of his estate by means of hired labour and agricultural machines in West-European or American fashion. Unfortunately, this solution could not be generally adopted, because the great majority of the landlords, even when they had the requisite practical knowledge of agriculture, had not the requisite capital, and could not easily obtain it. Where were they to find money for buying cattle, horses, and agricultural implements, for building stables and cattle-sheds, and for defraying all the other initial expenses? And supposing they succeeded in starting the new system, where was the working capital to come from? The old Government institution in which estates could be mortgaged according to the number of serfs was permanently closed, and the new land-credit associations had not yet come into existence. To borrow from private capitalists was not to be thought of, for money was so scarce that 10 per cent. was considered a "friendly" rate of interest. Recourse might be had, it is true, to the redemption operation, but in that case the Government would deduct the unpaid portion of any outstanding mortgage, and would pay the balance in depreciated Treasury bonds. In these circumstances the proprietors could not, as a rule, adopt what I have called the ideal solution, and had to content themselves with some simpler and more primitive arrangement. They could employ the peasants of the neighbouring villages to prepare the land and reap the crops either for a

fixed sum per acre or on the *métayage* system, or they could let their land to the peasants for one, three, or six years at a moderate rent.

In the northern agricultural zone, where the soil is poor and primitive farming with free labour can hardly be made to pay, the proprietors had to let their land at a small rent, and those of them who could not find places in the rural administration migrated to the towns and sought employment in the public service or in the numerous commercial and industrial enterprises which were springing up at that time. There they have since remained. Their country houses, if inhabited at all, are occupied only for a few months in summer, and too often present a melancholy spectacle of neglect and dilapidation. In the Black-Earth Zone, on the contrary, where the soil still possesses enough of its natural fertility to make farming on a large scale profitable, the estates are in a very different condition. The owners cultivate at least a part of their property, and can easily let to the peasants at a fair rent the land which they do not wish to farm themselves. Some have adopted the *métayage* system; others get the field-work done by the peasants at so much per acre. The more energetic, who have capital enough at their disposal, organise farms with hired labourers on the European model. If they are not so well off as formerly, it is because they have adopted a less patriarchal and more expensive style of living. Their land has doubled and trebled in value during the last thirty years, and their revenues have increased, if not in proportion, at least considerably. In 1903 I visited a number of estates in this region and found them in a very prosperous condition, with agricultural machines of the English or American types, an increasing variety in the rotation of crops, greatly improved breeds of cattle and horses, and all the other symptoms of a gradual transition to a more intensive and more rational system of agriculture.

It must be admitted, however, that even in the Black-Earth Zone the proprietors have formidable difficulties to contend with, the chief of which are the scarcity of good farm labourers, the frequent droughts, the low price of cereals, and the delay in getting the grain conveyed to the

seaports. On each of these difficulties and the remedies that might be applied I could write a separate chapter, but I fear to overtax the reader's patience, and shall therefore confine myself to a few remarks about the labour question. On this subject the complaints are loud and frequent all over the country. The peasants, it is said, have become lazy, careless, addicted to drunkenness, and shamelessly dishonest with regard to their obligations, so that it is difficult to farm even in the old primitive fashion, and impossible to introduce radical improvements in the methods of culture. In these sweeping accusations there is a certain amount of truth. That the muzhik, when working for others, exerts himself as little as possible; that he pays little attention to the quality of the work done; that he shows a reckless carelessness with regard to his employer's property; that he is capable of taking money in advance and failing to fulfil his contract; that he occasionally gets drunk; and that he is apt to commit certain acts of petty larceny when he gets the chance—all this is undoubtedly true, whatever biased theorists and sentimental peasant-worshippers may say to the contrary.*

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the fault is entirely on the side of the peasants, and equally erroneous to believe that the evils might be remedied, as is often suggested, by greater severity on the part of the tribunals, or by an improved system of passports. Farming with free labour, like every other department of human activity, requires a fair amount of knowledge, judgment, prudence, and tact, which cannot be replaced by ingenious legislation or judicial severity. In engaging labourers or servants it is necessary to select them carefully and make such conditions that they feel it to be to their interest to fulfil their contract loyally. This is too often overlooked

* Amongst themselves the peasants are not addicted to thieving, as is proved by the fact that they habitually leave their doors unlocked when the inmates of the house are working in the fields; but if the muzhik finds in the proprietor's farmyard a piece of iron or a bit of rope, or any of those little things that he constantly requires and has difficulty in obtaining, he is very apt to pick it up and carry it home. Gathering firewood in the landlord's forest he does not consider as theft, because "God planted the trees and watered them," and in the time of serfage he was allowed to supply himself with firewood in this way.

by the Russian landowners. From false views of economy they are inclined to choose the cheapest labourer without examining closely his other qualifications, or they take advantage of the peasant's pecuniary embarrassments and make with him a contract which it is hardly possible for him to fulfil. In spring, for instance, when his store of provisions is exhausted and he is being hard pressed by the tax-collector, they supply him with rye-meal or advance him a small sum of money on condition of his undertaking to do a relatively large amount of summer work. He knows that the contract is unfair to him, but what is he to do? He must get food for himself and his family, and a little ready money for his taxes, for the Communal authorities will probably sell his cow if he does not pay his arrears. In desperation he accepts the conditions and puts off the evil day—consoling himself with the reflection that perhaps (*avos'*) something may turn up in the meantime—but when the time comes for fulfilling his engagements the dilemma revives. According to the contract he ought to work nearly the whole summer for the proprietor; but he has his own land to attend to, and he has to make provision for the winter. In such circumstances the temptation to evade the terms of the contract is often too strong to be resisted.

In Russia, as in other countries, the principle holds true that for good labour a fair price must be paid. Several large proprietors of my acquaintance who habitually act on this principle assure me that they always obtain as much good labour as they require. I must add, however, that these fortunate proprietors have the advantage of possessing a comfortable amount of working capital, and are therefore not compelled, as so many of their less fortunate neighbours are, to manage their estates on the hand-to-mouth principle.

It is only, I fear, a minority of the landed proprietors that have grappled successfully with these and other difficulties of their position. As a class they are impoverished and indebted, but this state of things is not due entirely to serf-emancipation. The indebtedness of the Noblesse is a hereditary peculiarity of much older date. By some authorities it is attributed to the laws of Peter the Great, by which all nobles were obliged to spend the best part of their lives

in the military or civil service, and to leave the management of their estates to incompetent stewards. However that may be, it is certain that from the middle of the eighteenth century downwards the fact has frequently occupied the attention of the Government, and repeated attempts have been made to alleviate the evil. The Empress Elizabeth, Catherine II., Paul, Alexander I., Nicholas I., Alexander II., and Alexander III. tried successively, as one of the older ukazes expressed it, "to free the Noblesse from debt and from greedy moneylenders, and to prevent hereditary estates from passing into the hands of strangers." The means commonly adopted was the creation of mortgage banks founded and controlled by the Government for the purpose of advancing money to landed proprietors at a comparatively low rate of interest.

These institutions may have been useful to the few who desired to improve their estates, but they certainly did not cure, and rather tended to foster, the inveterate improvidence of the many. On the eve of the Emancipation the proprietors were indebted to the Government for the sum of 425 millions of roubles, and 69 per cent. of their serfs were mortgaged. A portion of this debt was gradually extinguished by the redemption operation, so that in 1880 over 300 millions had been paid off, but in the meantime new debts were being contracted. In 1873-4 nine private land-mortgage banks were created, and there was such a rush to obtain money from them that their paper was a glut in the market, and became seriously depreciated. When the prices of grain rose in 1875-80 the mortgage debt was diminished, but when they began to fall in 1880 it again increased, and in 1881 it stood at 396 millions. As the rate of interest was felt to be very burdensome there was a strong feeling among the landed proprietors at that time that the Government ought to help them, and in 1883 the nobles of the province of Orel ventured to address the Emperor on the subject. In reply to the address, Alexander III., who had strong Conservative leanings, was graciously pleased to declare in an ukaz that "it was really time to do something to help the Noblesse," and accordingly a new land-mortgage bank for the Noblesse was created. The favourable terms offered by it were taken

advantage of to such an extent that in the first four years of its activity (1886-90) it advanced to the proprietors over 200 million roubles. Then came two famine years, and in 1894 the mortgage debt of the Noblesse in that and other credit establishments was estimated at 994 millions.

By means of mortgages some proprietors succeeded in weathering the storm, but many gave up the struggle in despair and migrated to the towns. During the first thirty years after the Emancipation 20,000 estates were sold, and the area of land owned by the Noblesse was thereby diminished by 30 per cent.

This "expropriation of the Noblesse," as it has been called, has gone on with ever-increasing rapidity. During the first twenty years after the abolition of serfage (1861-81) the average amount of Noblesse-land sold yearly was under one and a half million acres, and it rose steadily until 1906-8, when it reached an average of over three and a half millions. In the short period of these three years (1906-8) the proportion of land owned by nobles in Russia proper sank from 52.2 to 48 per cent. of the whole area.

The townward movement indicated by these figures was naturally strongest among the landed proprietors of the barren northern regions, who were not in the habit of living on their estates. In the province of Olónets, for example, these gentlemen have divested themselves of about 90 per cent. of their land, and consequently that kind of property has almost entirely disappeared. On the other hand, in the black-soil region estates with resident proprietors are still plentiful, and there is no province in which more than 35 per cent. of the Noblesse-land has been alienated. In one province of this region (Tula) the amount alienated is only about 19 per cent.

The habit of mortgaging and selling estates does not necessarily mean the impoverishment of the landlords as a class. If the capital raised in that way is devoted to agricultural improvements, the result may be an increase of wealth. Unfortunately, in Russia the realised capital was usually not so employed. A very large proportion of it was spent unproductively, partly in luxuries and living abroad, and partly in unprofitable commercial and industrial specula-

tions. The industrial and railway fever which raged at the time induced many to risk and lose their capital, and it had indirectly an injurious effect on all by making money plentiful in the towns, and creating a more expensive style of living from which the landed gentry could not hold entirely aloof.

So far I have dwelt on the dark shadows of the picture, but it is not all shadow. In the last forty years the production and export of grain, which constitute the chief source of revenue for the landed proprietors, have increased enormously, thanks mainly to the improved means of transport. In the first decade after the Emancipation (1860-70) the average annual export of grain did not exceed one and a half million tons; in the second decade (1870-80) it leapt up to three and a half millions; in the last decade of the century it reached six millions; and in the latest period for which we have statistical data (1903-9) it was about eight millions, representing a value of fifty million pounds sterling. At the same time the home trade increased in consequence of the rapidly growing population of the towns. All this must have enriched the landed proprietors, and we can hardly suppose that the gains were all squandered on luxuries and unprofitable speculations.

The pessimists, however—and in Russia their name is legion—will not admit that any permanent advantage has been derived from this enormous increase in exports. On the contrary, they maintain that it is a national misfortune, because it is leading rapidly to a state of permanent impoverishment. It quickly exhausted, they say, the large reserves of grain in the villages, so that as soon as there was a very bad harvest the Government had to come to the rescue and feed the starving peasantry. Worse than this, it compromised the future prosperity of the country. Being in pecuniary difficulties, and consequently impatient to make money, the proprietors increased inordinately the area of grain-producing land at the expense of pasturage and forests, with the result that the live stock and the manuring of the land were diminished, the fertility of the soil impaired, and the necessary quantity of moisture in the atmosphere greatly lessened. There is some truth in this contention; but it

would seem that the soil and climate have not been affected so much as the pessimists suppose, because in recent years there have been some very good harvests.

On the whole, then, I think it may be justly said that the efforts of the landed proprietors to work their estates without serf labour have not as yet been brilliantly successful. Those who have failed are in the habit of complaining that they have not received sufficient support from the Government, which is accused of having systematically sacrificed the interests of agriculture, the mainstay of the national resources, to the creation of artificial and unnecessary manufacturing industries. How far such complaints and accusations are well founded I shall not attempt to decide. It is a complicated polemical question, into which the reader would probably decline to accompany me. Let us examine rather what influence the above-mentioned changes have had on the peasantry.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE EMANCIPATED PEASANTRY

At the commencement of the last chapter I pointed out in general terms the difficulty of describing clearly the immediate consequences of the Emancipation. In beginning now to speak of the influence which the great reform has had on the peasantry, I feel that the difficulty has reached its climax. The foreigner who desires merely to gain a general idea of the subject cannot be expected to take an interest in details, and even if he took the trouble to examine them attentively, he would derive from the labour little real information. What he wishes is a clear, concise, and dogmatic statement of general results. Has the material and moral condition of the peasantry improved since the Emancipation? That is the simple question which he has to put, and he naturally expects a simple, categorical answer.

In beginning my researches in this interesting field of inquiry, I had no adequate conception of the difficulties awaiting me. I imagined that I had merely to question intelligent, competent men who had had abundant opportunities of observation, and to criticise and boil down the information collected; but when I put this method of investigation to the test of experience it proved unsatisfactory. Very soon I came to perceive that my authorities were very far from being impartial observers. Most of them were evidently suffering from shattered illusions. They had expected that the Emancipation would produce instantaneously a wonderful improvement in the life and character of the rural population, and that the peasant would become at once a sober, industrious, model agriculturist.

These expectations were not realised. One year passed, five years passed, ten years passed, and the expected transformation did not take place. On the contrary, there appeared certain very ugly phenomena which were not at all

in the programme. The peasants, it was said, began to drink more and to work less, and the public life which the Communal institutions produced was by no means of a desirable kind. The "bawlers" (*gorlopány*) acquired a prejudicial influence in the Village Assemblies, and in very many Vólosts the peasant judges, elected by their fellow-villagers, acquired a bad habit of selling their decisions for vodka. The natural consequence of all this was that those who had indulged in exaggerated expectations sank into a state of inordinate despondency, and imagined things to be much worse than they really were.

For different reasons, those who had not indulged in exaggerated expectations, and had not sympathised with the Emancipation in the form in which it was effected, were equally inclined to take a pessimistic view of the situation: In every ugly phenomenon they found a confirmation of their opinions. The result was precisely what they had foretold. The peasants had used their liberty and their privileges to their own detriment and to the detriment of others!

The extreme "Liberals" were also inclined, for reasons of their own, to join in the doleful chorus. They desired that the condition of the peasantry should be further improved by legislative enactments, and accordingly they painted the evils in as dark colours as possible.

Thus, from various reasons, the majority of the educated classes were unduly disposed to represent to themselves and to others the actual condition of the peasantry in a very unfavourable light, and I felt that from them there was no hope of obtaining the *lumen siccum* which I desired. I determined, therefore, to try the method of questioning the peasants themselves. Surely they must know whether their condition was better or worse than it had been before their Emancipation.

Again I was doomed to disappointment. A few months' experience sufficed to convince me that my new method was by no means so effectual as I had imagined. Uneducated people rarely make generalisations which have no practical utility, and I feel sure that very few Russian peasants ever put to themselves the question: Am I better off now than I or my father was in the time of serfage? When such a

question is put to them they feel taken aback. And in truth it is no easy matter to sum up the two sides of the account and draw an accurate balance, save in those exceptional cases in which the proprietor flagrantly abused his authority. The present money-dues and taxes are often more burdensome than the labour-dues in the old times. If the serfs had a great many ill-defined obligations to fulfil—such as the carting of the master's grain to market, the preparing of his firewood, the supplying him with eggs, chickens, home-made linen, and the like—they had, on the other hand, a good many ill-defined privileges. They grazed their cattle during a part of the year on the manor-land; they received firewood and occasionally logs for repairing their huts; sometimes the proprietor lent them or gave them a cow or a horse when they had been visited by the cattle-plague or the horse-stealer; and in times of famine they could look to their master for support. All this has now come to an end. Their burdens and their privileges have been swept away together, and been replaced by clearly defined, unbending, unelastic legal relations. They have now to pay the market-price for every stick of firewood which they burn, for every log which they require for repairing their houses, and for every rood of land on which to graze their cattle. Nothing is now to be had gratis. The demand to pay is encountered at every step. If a cow dies or a horse is stolen, the owner can no longer go to the proprietor with the hope of receiving a present, or at least a loan without interest, but must, if he has no ready money, apply to the village usurer, who probably considers 20 or 30 per cent. as a by no means exorbitant rate of interest.

Besides this, from the economic point of view village life has been completely revolutionised. Formerly the members of a peasant family obtained from their ordinary domestic resources nearly all they required. Their food came from their fields, cabbage-garden, and farmyard. Materials for clothing were supplied by their plots of flax and their sheep, and were worked up into linen and cloth by the female members of the household. Fuel, as I have said, and torches wherewith to light the *izbà*—for oil was too expensive and petroleum was unknown—were obtained

gratis. Their sheep, cattle, and horses were bred at home, and their agricultural implements, except in so far as a little iron was required, could be made by themselves without any pecuniary expenditure. Money was required only for the purchase of a few cheap domestic utensils, such as pots, pans, knives, hatchets, wooden dishes and spoons, and for the payment of taxes, which were small in amount and often paid by the proprietor. In these circumstances the quantity of money in circulation among the peasants was infinitesimally small, the few exchanges which took place in a village being generally effected by barter. The taxes and the vodka required for village festivals, weddings, or funerals were the only large items of expenditure for the year, and they were generally covered by the sums brought home by the members of the family who went to work in the towns.

Very different is the present condition of affairs. The spinning, weaving, and other home industries have been killed by the big factories, and the flax and wool have to be sold to raise a little ready money for the numerous new items of expenditure. Everything has to be bought—clothes, firewood, petroleum, improved agricultural implements, and many other articles which are now regarded as necessaries of life—whilst comparatively little is earned by working in the towns, because the big families have been broken up, and a household now consists usually of husband and wife, who must both remain at home, and children who are not yet bread-winners. Recalling to mind all these things and the other drawbacks and advantages of his actual position, the old muzhik has naturally much difficulty in striking a balance, and he may well be quite sincere when, on being asked whether things now are on the whole better or worse than in the time of serfage, he scratches the back of his head and replies hesitatingly, with a mystified expression on his wrinkled face: "How shall I say to you? They are both better and worse!" (*"Kak vam skazát'? I lûtche i khûdzhe!"*) If, however, you press him further, and ask whether he would himself like to return to the old state of things, he is pretty sure to answer, with a slow shake of the head and a twinkle in his eye, as if some forgotten item in the account had suddenly recurred to him: "Oh, no!"

What materially increases the difficulty of this general computation is that great changes have taken place in the well-being of the particular households. Some have greatly prospered, while others have become impoverished. That is one of the most characteristic consequences of the Emancipation. In the old times the general economic stagnation and the uncontrolled authority of the proprietor tended to keep all the households of a village on the same level. There was little opportunity for an intelligent, enterprising serf to become rich, and if he contrived to increase his revenue, he had probably to give a considerable share of it to the proprietor, unless he had the good fortune to belong to a *grand seigneur* like Count Sheremétiev, who was proud of having rich men among his serfs.

On the other hand, the proprietor, for evident reasons of self-interest, as well as from benevolent motives, prevented the less intelligent and less enterprising members of the Commune from becoming bankrupt. The Communal equality thus artificially maintained has now disappeared, the restrictions on individual freedom of action have been removed, the struggle for life has become intensified, and, as always happens in such circumstances, the strong men go up in the world while the weak ones go to the wall. All over the country we find on the one hand the beginnings of a village aristocracy—or perhaps we should call it a plutocracy, for it is based on money—and on the other hand an ever-increasing pauperism. Some peasants possess capital, with which they buy land outside the Commune or embark in trade, while others have to sell their live stock, and have sometimes to cede to neighbours their share of the Communal property. This change in rural life is so often referred to that, in order to express it, a new, barbarous word, *differentsiatsia* (differentiation) has been invented.

Hoping to obtain fuller information with the aid of official protection, I attached myself to one of the travelling sections of an agricultural Commission appointed by the Government, and during a whole summer I helped to collect materials in the provinces bordering on the Volga. The inquiry resulted in a gigantic report of nearly 2,500 folio pages, but the general conclusions were extremely vague.

The peasantry, it was said, were passing, like the landed proprietors, through a period of transition, in which the main features of their future normal life had not yet become clearly defined. In some localities their condition had decidedly improved, whereas in others it had improved little or not at all. Then followed a long list of recommendations in favour of Government assistance, better agronomic education, competitive exhibitions, more varied rotation of crops, and greater zeal on the part of the clergy in disseminating among the people moral principles in general and love of work in particular.

Not greatly enlightened by this official activity, I returned to my private studies, and at the end of six years I published my impressions and conclusions in the first edition of this work. While recognising that there was much uncertainty as to the future, I was inclined, on the whole, to take a hopeful view of the situation. I was unable, however, to maintain permanently that comfortable frame of mind. After my departure from Russia in 1878, the accounts which reached me from various parts of the country became blacker and blacker, and were partly confirmed by short tours which I made in 1889-96. At last, in the summer of 1903, I determined to return to some of my old haunts and look at things with my own eyes. At that moment some hospitable friends invited me to pay them a visit at their country-house in the province of Smolensk, and I gladly accepted the invitation because Smolensk, when I knew it formerly, was one of the poorest provinces, and I thought it well to begin my new studies by examining the impoverishment, of which I had heard so much, at its maximum.

From the railway station at Viazma, where I arrived one morning at sunrise, I had some twenty miles to drive, and as soon as I got clear of the little town I began my observations. What I saw around me seemed to contradict the sombre accounts I had received. The villages through which I passed had not at all the look of dilapidation and misery which I expected. On the contrary, the houses were larger and better constructed than they used to be, and each of them had a chimney! That latter fact was important, because formerly a large proportion of the peasants of this

region had no such luxury, and allowed the smoke to find its exit by the open door. In vain I looked for a hut of the old type, and my *yamstchik* assured me I should have to go a long way to find one. Then I noticed a good many iron ploughs of the European model, and my *yamstchik* informed me that their predecessor, the *sokhá*, with which I had been so familiar, had entirely disappeared from the district. Next I noticed that in the neighbourhood of the villages flax was grown in large quantities. That was certainly not an indication of poverty, because flax is a valuable product which requires to be well manured, and plentiful manure implies a considerable quantity of live stock. Lastly, before arriving at my destination, I noticed clover being grown in the fields. This made me open my eyes with astonishment, because the introduction of artificial grasses into the traditional rotation of crops indicates the transition to a higher and more intensive system of agriculture. As I had never seen clover in Russia except on the estates of very advanced proprietors, I said to my *yamstchik*:—

"Listen, little brother! That field belongs to the landlord?"

"Not at all, Master; it is muzhik-land."

On arriving at the country-house I told my friends what I had seen, and they explained it to me. Smolensk is no longer one of the poorer provinces; it has become comparatively prosperous. In two or three districts large quantities of flax are produced and give the cultivators a big revenue; in other districts plenty of remunerative work is supplied by the forests. Everywhere a considerable proportion of the younger men go regularly to the towns and bring home savings enough to pay the taxes and make a little surplus in the domestic budget. A few days afterwards the village secretary brought me his books, and showed me that there were practically no arrears of taxation.

Passing on to other provinces, I found similar proofs of progress and prosperity, but at the same time not a few indications of impoverishment; and I was rapidly relapsing into my previous state of uncertainty as to whether any general conclusions could be drawn, when an old friend, himself a first-rate authority, with many years of practical

experience, came to my assistance.* He informed me that a number of specialists had recently made detailed investigations into the present economic conditions of the rural population, and he kindly placed at my disposal, in his charming country-house near Moscow, the voluminous researches of these investigators. Here, during a good many weeks, I revelled in the statistical materials collected, and to the best of my ability I tested the conclusions drawn from them. Many of these conclusions I had to dismiss with the Scottish verdict of "not proven," whilst others seemed to me worthy of acceptance. Of these latter the most important were those drawn from the arrears of taxation.

The arrears in the payment of taxes may be regarded as a pretty safe barometer for testing the condition of the rural population, because the peasant habitually pays his rates and taxes when he has the means of doing so; when he falls seriously and permanently into arrears, it may be assumed that he is becoming impoverished. If the arrears fluctuate from year to year, the causes of the impoverishment may be regarded as accidental and perhaps temporary, but if they steadily accumulate, we must conclude that there is something radically wrong. Bearing these facts in mind, let us hear what the statistics say.

During the first twenty years after the Emancipation (1861-81) things went on in their old grooves. The poor provinces remained poor, and the fertile provinces showed no signs of distress. During the next twenty years (1881-1901) the arrears of the whole of European Russia rose, roughly speaking, from 27 to 144 millions of roubles, and the increase, strange to say, took place chiefly in the fertile provinces. In 1890, for example, out of 52 millions, nearly 41 millions, or 78 per cent., fell to the share of the provinces of the Black-Earth Zone. In seven of these the average arrears per male, which had been in 1882 only 90 kopeks, rose in 1893 to 600, and in 1899 to 2,200! And this accumulation had taken place in spite of reductions of taxation to the extent of 37 million roubles in 1881-83, and successive famine grants from the Treasury in 1891-99 to the amount

* I hope I am committing no indiscretion when I say that the old friend in question was Prince Alexander Stcherbátov of Vasilievskoe.

of 203 millions.* On the other hand, in the provinces with a poor soil the arrears had greatly decreased. In Smolensk, for example, they had sunk from 202 per cent. to 13 per cent. of the annual sum to be paid, and in nearly all the other provinces of the west and north a similar change for the better had taken place.

These and many other figures which I might quote show that a great and very curious economic revolution has been gradually effected. The Black-Earth Zone, which was formerly regarded as the inexhaustible granary of the Empire, has become impoverished, whilst the provinces which were formerly regarded as hopelessly poor are now in a comparatively flourishing condition. This fact has been officially recognised. In a classification of the provinces according to their degree of prosperity, drawn up by a special commission of experts in 1903, those with a poor light soil appear at the top, and those with the famous black earth are at the bottom of the list. In the deliberations of the commission, many reasons for this extraordinary state of things are adduced. Most of them have merely a local significance. The big fact, taken as a whole, seems to me to show that, in consequence of certain changes of which I shall speak presently, the peasantry of European Russia can no longer live by the traditional modes of agriculture, even in the most fertile districts, and require for their support some subsidiary occupations such as are practised in the less fertile provinces.

"Another sign of impoverishment is the decrease in the quantity of live stock. According to the very imperfect statistics available, for every hundred inhabitants the number of horses has decreased from 26 to 17, the number of cattle from 36 to 25, and the number of sheep from 73 to 40. This is a serious matter, because it means that the land is not so well manured and cultivated as formerly, and is consequently not so productive. Several economists have attempted to fix precisely to what extent the productivity has decreased, but I confess I have little faith in the accuracy of their conclusions. M. Polênof, for example, a most able and

* In 1901 an additional famine grant of 33½ million roubles had to be made by the Government.

conscientious investigator, calculates that between 1861 and 1895, all over Russia, the amount of food produced, in relation to the number of the population, has decreased by seven per cent. His methods of calculation are ingenious, but the statistical data with which he operates are so far from accurate that his conclusions on this point have, in my opinion, little or no scientific value. With all due deference to Russian economists I may say parenthetically that they are very fond of juggling with carelessly collected statistics, as if their data were mathematical quantities.

Several of the Zemstvos have grappled with this question of peasant impoverishment, and the data which they have collected make a very doleful impression. In the province of Moscow, for example, a careful investigation gave the following results: Forty per cent. of the peasant households had no longer any horses, fifteen per cent. had given up agriculture altogether, and about ten per cent. had no longer any land. We must not, however, assume, as is often done, that the peasant families who have no live stock and no longer till the land are utterly ruined. In reality many of them are better off than their neighbours who appear as prosperous in the official statistics, having found profitable occupation in the home industries, in the towns, in the factories, or on the estates of the landed proprietors. It must be remembered that Moscow is the centre of one of the regions in which manufacturing industry has progressed with gigantic strides during the last half-century, and it would be strange indeed if, in such a region, the peasantry who supply the labour to the towns and factories remained thriving agriculturists. That many Russians are surprised and horrified at the actual state of things shows to what an extent the educated classes are still under the illusion that Russia can create for herself a manufacturing industry capable of competing with that of Western Europe without uprooting from the soil a portion of her rural population.

It is only in the purely agricultural regions that families officially classed as belonging to the peasantry may be regarded as on the brink of pauperism because they have no live stock, and even with regard to them I should hesitate to make such an assumption, because the muzhiks, as I have

already had occasion to remark, have strange nomadic habits unknown to the rural population of other countries. It is a mistake, therefore, to calculate the Russian peasant's budget exclusively on the basis of local resources.

To the pessimists who assure me that according to their calculations the peasantry in general *must be* on the brink of starvation, I reply that there are many facts, even in the statistical tables on which they rely, which run counter to their deductions. Let me quote a few by way of illustration. The peasantry have not only redeemed the land which they received at the time of the Emancipation, but they have also, of their own free will, greatly added to it by purchase, with the assistance of a Peasant Land-Bank, which was founded for that purpose by the Government in 1882. During the first twenty years of its activity that institution expended over forty millions sterling on the purchase of nineteen millions of acres, which were re-sold to rural communes, peasant associations, and individual peasants on the credit system. In subsequent years these operations were greatly increased and accelerated. During the three years of 1906, 1907 and 1908 the quantity of land purchased by the peasants with the assistance of the bank amounted to 5,827,000 acres, which constituted an addition of about one-twelfth to the land they already possessed. All these purchases remain, of course, mortgaged until the debt to the bank is extinguished by the sinking fund, and the fact that the owners willingly pay, as interest and sinking fund, no less than 7½ per cent., shows that the peasantry as a class are very far from absolute destitution. No doubt there is another side to the medal. While many peasants are thus increasing their landed property, others are becoming poorer, but this is merely one of those inevitable results of economic progress of which I have spoken elsewhere.

Another indication that the impoverishment of the peasantry is not so great as is often asserted is to be found in the extension of savings banks and small credit associations. From 1865 to 1909 the branches of the Government Savings Bank increased in number from 47 to 6,752, the number of depositors from 72,000 to over six millions, and the amount of deposits from £564,000 to over 120 millions

sterling, of which about one-fourth is believed to belong to the rural population. In addition to this, there are now 3,556 village savings banks, which held in 1910 deposits to the amount of £2,780,000, and a large number of rural credit associations, of which 1,476 held deposits amounting to £6,000,000. This is not much for a big country like Russia, but it is a beginning, and it suggests that the impoverishment is not so severe and so universal as the pessimists would have us believe.

There is thus room for differences of opinion as to how far the peasantry have become impoverished, but there is no doubt that their condition is far from satisfactory, and we have to face the important problem why the abolition of serfage has not produced the beneficent consequences which even moderate men so confidently predicted, and how the present unsatisfactory state of things is to be remedied.

The most common explanation among those who have never seriously studied the subject is that it all comes from the demoralisation of the common people. In this view there is a modicum of truth. That the peasantry injure their material welfare by drunkenness and improvidence there can be no reasonable doubt, as is shown by the comparatively flourishing state of certain villages of Old Ritualists and Molokánye in which there is no drunkenness, and in which the community exercises a strong moral control over the individual members. If the Orthodox Church could make the peasantry refrain from the inordinate use of strong drink as effectually as it makes them refrain during a great part of the year from animal food, and if it could instil into their minds a few simple moral principles as successfully as it has inspired them with a belief in the efficacy of the Sacraments, it would certainly confer on them an inestimable benefit. But this is not to be expected. The great majority of the parish priests are quite unfit for such a task, and the few who have aspirations in that direction rarely acquire a perceptible moral influence over their parishioners.

Perhaps more is to be expected from the schoolmaster than from the priest, but it will be long before the schools can produce even a partial moral regeneration. Their first influence, strange as the assertion may seem, is often in a

diametrically opposite direction. When only a few peasants in a village can read and write they have such facilities for overreaching their "dark" neighbours that they are apt to employ their knowledge for dishonest purposes; and thus it occasionally happens that the man who has the most education is the greatest scoundrel in the *Mir*. Such facts are often used by the opponents of popular education, but in reality they supply a good reason for disseminating primary education as rapidly as possible. When all the peasants have learned to read and write they will present a less inviting field for swindling, and the temptations to dishonesty will be proportionately diminished. Meanwhile it must be admitted that the village schools sometimes tend to demoralise rather than moralise the peasantry by disseminating crude Socialist notions. During the revolutionary movement of 1905-7, for example, the village schoolmaster sometimes helped the student-agitators to foment agrarian disorders.

After drunkenness the besetting sin which is supposed to explain the impoverishment of the peasantry is incorrigible laziness. On that subject I feel inclined to put in a plea of extenuating circumstances in favour of the muzhik. Certainly he is very slow in his movements—slower perhaps than the English rustic—and he has a marvellous capacity for wasting valuable time without any perceptible qualms of conscience; but he is in this respect, if I may use a favourite phrase of the Social Scientists, "the product of environment." To the proprietors who habitually reproach him with time-wasting he might reply with a very strong *tu quoque* argument, and to other classes of the population the argument might likewise be addressed. The St. Petersburg official, for example, who writes edifying disquisitions about peasant indolence, considers that for himself attendance at his office for four hours, a large portion of which is devoted to the unproductive labour of cigarette smoking, constitutes a very fair day's work. The truth is that in Russia the struggle for life is not nearly so intense as in more densely populated countries, and society is so constituted that all can live without very strenuous exertion. The Russians seem, therefore, to the traveller who comes from the West an indolent, apathetic race. If the traveller happens to come from the

East—especially if he has been living among pastoral races—the Russians will appear to him energetic and laborious. Their character in this respect corresponds to their geographical position: they stand midway between the laborious, painstaking, industrious population of Western Europe and the indolent, undisciplined, spasmodically energetic populations of Central Asia. They are capable of effecting much by vigorous, intermittent effort—witness the peasant at harvest time, or the St. Petersburg official when some big legislative project has to be submitted to the Emperor before a given date—but they have not yet learned regular laborious habits. In short, the Russians might move the world if it could be done by a jerk, but they are still deficient in that calm perseverance and dogged tenacity which characterise the Teutonic race.

Without seeking further to determine how far the moral defects of the peasantry have a deleterious influence on their material welfare, I proceed to examine the external causes which are generally supposed to contribute largely to their impoverishment, and will deal first with the evils of peasant self-government.

That the peasant self-government is very far from being in a satisfactory condition must be admitted by any impartial observer. The more laborious and well-to-do peasants, unless they wish to abuse their position directly or indirectly for their own advantage, try to escape election as office-bearers, and leave the administration in the hands of the less respectable members. Not unfrequently a *Vólost* Elder trades with the money he collects as dues or taxes; and sometimes, when he becomes insolvent, the peasants have to pay their taxes and dues a second time. The Village Assemblies, too, have become worse than they were in the days of serfage. At that time the Heads of Households—who, it must be remembered, have alone a voice in the decisions—were few in number, laborious, and well-to-do, and they kept the lazy, unruly members under strict control. Now that the large families have been broken up, and almost every adult peasant is Head of a Household, the Communal affairs are sometimes decided by a noisy majority; and certain Communal decisions may be obtained by "treating the *Mir*"—that is to say, by

supplying a certain amount of vodka. Often I have heard old peasants speak of these things, and finish their recital by some such remark as this: "There is no order now; the people have been spoiled; it was better in the time of the masters."

These evils are very real, and I have no desire to extenuate them, but I believe they are by no means so great as is commonly supposed. If the lazy, worthless members of the Commune had really the direction of Communal affairs we should find that in the Northern Agricultural Zone, where it is necessary to manure the soil, the periodical redistributions of the Communal land would be very frequent; for in a new distribution the lazy peasant has a good chance of getting a well-manured lot in exchange for the lot which he has exhausted. In reality, so far as my observations extend, these general distributions of the land are not more frequent than they were before.

Of the various functions of the peasant self-government the judicial are perhaps the most frequently and the most severely criticised. And certainly not without reason, for the *Vólost* Courts are too often accessible to the influence of alcohol, and in some districts the peasants say that he who becomes a judge takes a sin on his soul. I am not at all sure, however, that it would be well to abolish these courts altogether, as some people propose. In many respects they are better suited to peasant requirements than the ordinary tribunals. Their procedure is infinitely simpler, more expeditious, and incomparably less expensive, and they are guided by traditional custom and plain common sense, whereas the ordinary tribunals have to judge according to the civil law, which is unknown to the peasantry and not always applicable to their affairs. Few ordinary judges have a sufficiently intimate knowledge of the minute details of peasant life to be able to decide fairly the cases that are brought before the *Vólost* Courts; and even if a justice had sufficient knowledge he could not adopt the moral and juridical notions of the peasantry. These are often very different from those of the upper classes. In cases of matrimonial separation, for instance, the educated man naturally assumes that, if there is any question of alimony, it should

be paid by the husband to the wife. The peasant, on the contrary, assumes as naturally that the wife who ceases to be a member of the family ought to pay compensation for the loss of labour power which the separation involves. In like manner, according to traditional peasant-law, if an unmarried son is working away from home, his earnings do not belong to himself, but to his family, and in a *Vólost* Court they could be claimed by the Head of the Household.

Occasionally, it is true, the peasant judges allow their respect for old traditional conceptions in general, and for the authority of parents in particular, to carry them a little too far. I was told lately of one affair which took place not long ago, within a hundred miles of Moscow, in which the judges decided that a respectable young peasant should be flogged because he refused to give his father the money he earned as groom in the service of a neighbouring proprietor, though it was notorious in the district that the father was a disreputable old drunkard who carried to the *kabak* (gin-shop) all the money he could obtain by fair means and foul. When I remarked to my informant, who was not an admirer of peasant institutions, that the incident reminded me of the respect for the *patria potestas* in old Roman times, he stared at me with a look of surprise and indignation, and exclaimed laconically, "*Patria potestas?* No, no! Simply *Vodka!*" He was evidently convinced that the disreputable old father had got his respectable son flogged by "treating" the judges. In such cases flogging can no longer be used, for the *Vólost* Courts were recently deprived of the right to inflict corporal punishment.

These administrative and judicial abuses gradually reached the ears of the Government, and in 1889 it attempted to remove them by creating a body of Rural Supervisors (*Zemskiye Natchalniki*). Under their supervision and control some abuses may have been occasionally prevented or corrected, and some rascally *Vólost* Secretaries may have been punished or dismissed, but the peasant self-government as a whole has not been perceptibly improved, and the Supervisors, or Land Captains as they are sometimes called, are extremely unpopular. In the Duma and elsewhere I have

frequently heard them described as simply instruments of bureaucratic tyranny.

Let us glance now at the opinions of those who hold that the material progress of the peasantry has been prevented chiefly, not by the mere abuses of the Communal administration, but by the essential principles of the Communal institutions, and especially by the practice of periodically redistributing the Communal land. In the endless discussions on this subject between abolitionists and Conservatives, there has been a great deal of exaggeration on both sides. The backward condition of the peasantry cannot really be explained by the influence of one particular institution or custom; it is the result of the economic, social and political development of the nation as a whole; and among the numerous causes by which it has been produced, the traditional practice of periodically redistributing the Communal land has played, I believe, a very subordinate part.

As a matter of principle there can be no doubt that it is much more difficult to farm well on a large number of narrow strips of land, many of which are at a great distance from the farmyard, than on a compact piece of land which the farmer may divide and cultivate as he pleases; and there can be as little doubt that the husbandman is more likely to improve his land if his tenure is secure. All this, and much more of the same kind, must be accepted as indisputable truth, but it has little direct bearing on the concrete practical question as to why the Russian peasantry have made so little progress in agriculture. That they were prevented by the Communal institutions from adopting various systems of high farming is a theory which hardly requires serious consideration. They never thought of such radical innovations, and if they had conceived such novel ideas they possessed neither the knowledge nor the capital necessary to realise them. Since the Emancipation, in many villages some of the more intelligent and enterprising peasants purchase land outside the Communal limits, and are free to cultivate it as they please; but on this private property they rarely improve their traditional methods of culture. And in this there is nothing surprising, because the neighbouring estates,

owned by rich landed proprietors, are farmed precisely in the same primitive fashion.

But is it not true that the Commune prevented good cultivation according to the system of agriculture actually in use? To reply to this question I must make a little digression.

Except in the far north and the Steppe region, where the agriculture is of a peculiar kind, adapted to the local conditions, the peasants invariably till their land according to the ordinary three-field system, in which good cultivation means, practically speaking, the plentiful use of manure. Does, then, the existence of the *Mir* prevent the peasants from manuring their fields well?

Many people who speak on this subject in an authoritative tone seem to imagine that the peasants in general do not manure their fields at all. This idea is an utter mistake. In those regions, it is true, where the rich black soil still retains a large part of its virgin fertility, the manure is used as fuel, or simply thrown away, because the peasants believe that it would not be profitable to put it on their fields, and their conviction is, at least to some extent, well founded;* but in the Northern Agricultural Zone, where unmanured soil gives only a very meagre harvest, the peasants put upon their fields all the manure they possess. If they do not put enough it is simply because they have not sufficient live-stock.

It is only in the southern provinces, where no manure is required, that periodical redistributions take place frequently. As we travel northward we find the term lengthens; and in the Northern Agricultural Zone, where manure is indispensable, general redistributions are extremely rare. In the province of Yaroslavl, for example, the Communal land is generally divided into two parts: the manured land lying near the village, and the unmanured land lying beyond. The latter alone is subject to frequent redistribution. On the former the existing tenures are rarely disturbed, and when it becomes necessary to give a share to a new

* As recently as 1903 I found that one of the most intelligent and energetic landlords of the province of Vorónezh followed in this respect the example of the peasants, and he assured me that he had proved by experience the advantage of doing so.

household, the change is effected with the least possible prejudice to vested rights.

The policy of the Government has always been to admit redistributions in principle, but to prevent their too frequent recurrence. For this purpose the Emancipation Law stipulated that they could be decreed only by a three-fourths majority of the Village Assembly, and in 1893 a further obstacle was created by a law providing that the minimum term between two redistributions should be twelve years, and that they should never be undertaken without the sanction of the Rural Supervisor.

Whatever the merits and disadvantages of the Russian Communal system may be, this venerable institution now seems destined to disappear. In official circles it has come to be regarded as one of the greatest obstacles to economic development by hampering the energies of the more industrious and enterprising section of the peasantry; and it is believed to conduce to the spread of revolutionary ideas by preventing the growth of a healthy veneration for the rights of private property. One of its most determined enemies was M. Stolypin. Soon after his accession to power he prepared a Bill for its gradual abolition, and this bill was issued as an ukaz on November 22, 1906. Since that time local commissions have been busy at work all over the country, making arrangements for the transition from Communal to individual property, and their labours are already bearing fruit abundantly. On May 1, 1911, no less than 1,518,800 Heads of Households had made the transition, and about 30,000,000 acres of Communal land had become private property. If the work of these commissions, which display great zeal and ability, continues to advance as rapidly as hitherto, it must effect, in a few years, a wonderful revolution in the economic life of the peasantry. Meanwhile the results are being awaited with intense interest by all serious students of Russian affairs.*

Up to this point I have dealt with the so-called causes of peasant impoverishment which are much talked of, but which

* On this subject two interesting articles by Mr. Shidlovsky and Professor Pares have been published in the first number (January, 1912) of *The Russian Review*, an excellent quarterly periodical recently founded by the School of Russian Studies in the University of Liverpool.

are, in my opinion, only of secondary importance. I pass now to those which are more tangible and which have exerted on the condition of the peasantry a more palpable influence. And, first, inordinate taxation.

This is a very big subject, on which a bulky volume might be written, but I shall cut it very short, because I know that the ordinary reader does not like to be troubled with voluminous financial statistics. Briefly, then, the emancipated serf had to pay three kinds of direct taxation: Imperial to the Central Government, local to the Zemstvo, and Communal to the *Mir* and the *Vólost;* and besides these he had to pay a yearly sum for the redemption of the land allotment which he received at the time of the Emancipation. Taken together, these sums formed a heavy burden, but for ten or twelve years they were paid pretty regularly. Then began to appear symptoms of distress, especially in the provinces with a poor soil, and in 1872 the Government sent into the provinces a Commission of Inquiry, in which I had the privilege of taking part unofficially. The inquiry showed that something ought to be done, but at that moment the authorities were so busy with administrative reforms and with trying to develop industry and commerce that they had little time for studying and improving the economic position of the silent, long-suffering muzhik.

It was not till nearly ten years later, when the Government began to feel the pinch of the ever-increasing arrears, that it recognised the necessity for relieving the rural population. For this purpose it abolished the salt-tax and the poll-tax and repeatedly lessened the burden of the redemption payments until they were completely remitted in 1906-7. Further relief was afforded in 1899 by an important reform in the mode of collecting the direct taxes. From the police, who often ruined peasant householders by applying distraint indiscriminately, the collection of taxes was transferred to special authorities who took into consideration the temporary pecuniary embarrassments of the taxpayers. Another benefit conferred on the peasantry by this reform was that the individual members of the Commune ceased to be responsible for the fiscal obligations of the Commune as a whole.

After these alleviations had been granted the annual total

demanded from the peasantry directly was 173 million roubles, and the average annual sum to be paid by each peasant household varied, according to the locality, from 11½ to 20 roubles (23s. to 40s.). In addition to this annuity there was a heavy burden of accumulated arrears, especially in the central and eastern provinces, which amounted in 1899 to 143 millions. Of the indirect taxes I can say nothing definite, because it is impossible to calculate, even approximately, the share of them which falls on the rural population, but they must not be left out of account. During the ten years of M. Witte's term of office as Minister of Finance (1893-1903) the revenue of the Imperial Treasury was nearly doubled, and though the increase was due partly to improvements in the financial administration, we can hardly believe that the peasantry did not in some measure contribute to it. In any case, it was very difficult, if not impossible, for them, under these conditions, to improve their economic position. On that point all Russian economists are agreed. One of the most competent and sober-minded authorities, the late M. Schwanebach, calculated that the head of a peasant household, after deducting the grain required to feed his family, had to pay into the Imperial Treasury, according to the district in which he resided, from 25 to 100 per cent. of his agricultural revenue. If that calculation was even approximately correct, we must conclude that further financial reforms were urgently required, especially in those provinces where the population live exclusively by agriculture.

Since that time the peasant's burden has been somewhat lessened, especially by the remission of the redemption dues, which I have already mentioned, but it is still far too heavy in proportion to his slender resources. With good harvests he can balance his budget and avoid arrears of taxation, but as soon as the harvest is below the average he gets into difficulties; and, as he has too often little or no reserve to fall back upon, a second bad harvest may bring him to the verge of bankruptcy.

Heavy as the burden of taxation undoubtedly is, it might perhaps be borne without very serious inconvenience if the peasant families could utilise productively all their time and

strength. Unfortunately, in the existing economic organisation a great deal of their time and energy is necessarily wasted. Their economic life was radically dislocated by the Emancipation, and they have not yet succeeded in reorganising it according to the new conditions.

In the time of serfage an estate formed, from the economic point of view, a co-operative agricultural association, under a manager who possessed unlimited authority, and sometimes abused it, but who was generally wordly-wise enough to understand that the prosperity of the whole required the prosperity of the component parts. By the abolition of serfage the association was dissolved and liquidated, and the strong, compact whole fell into a heap of independent units, with separate and often mutually hostile interests. Some of the disadvantages of this change for the peasantry I have already enumerated above. The most important I have now to mention. In virtue of the Emancipation Law each family received an amount of land which tempted it to continue farming on its own account, but which did not enable it to earn a living and pay its rates and taxes. The peasant thus became a kind of amphibious creature—half farmer and half something else—cultivating his allotment for a portion of his daily bread, and obliged to have some other occupation wherewith to cover the inevitable deficit in his domestic budget. If he was fortunate enough to find near his home a bit of land to be let at a reasonable rent, he might cultivate it in addition to his own, and thereby gain a livelihood; but if he had not the good luck to find such a piece of land in the immediate neighbourhood, he had to look for some subsidiary occupation in which to employ his leisure time; and where was such occupation to be found in an ordinary Russian village? In former years he might have employed himself perhaps in carting the proprietor's grain to distant markets or still more distant seaports, but that means of making a little money has been destroyed by the extension of railways. Practically, then, he is now obliged to choose between two alternatives: either to farm his allotment and spend a great part of the year in idleness, or to leave the cultivation of his allotment to his wife and children and to seek employment elsewhere—often

at such a distance that his earnings hardly cover the expenses of the journey. In either case much time and energy are wasted.

The evil results of this state of things were intensified by another change which was brought about by the Emancipation. In the time of serfage the peasant families, as I have already remarked, were usually very large. They remained undivided, partly from the influence of patriarchal conceptions, but chiefly because the proprietors, recognising the advantage of large units, prevented them from breaking up. As soon as the proprietor's authority was removed, the process of disintegration began and spread rapidly. Everyone wished to be independent, and in a very short time nearly every able-bodied married peasant had a house of his own. The economic consequences were disastrous. A large amount of money had to be expended in constructing new houses and farmsteadings; and the old habit of one male member remaining at home to cultivate the land allotment with the female members of the family whilst the others went to earn wages elsewhere had to be abandoned. Many large families, which had been prosperous and comfortable—rich according to peasant conceptions—dissolved into three or four small ones, all on the brink of pauperism.

The last cause of peasant impoverishment that I have to mention is perhaps the most important of all: I mean the natural increase of population without a corresponding increase in the means of subsistence. Since the Emancipation in 1861 the population has nearly doubled, whilst the amount of Communal land, in the great majority of Communes, has remained the same. It is not surprising, therefore, that when talking with peasants about their actual condition, one constantly hears the despairing cry, "*Zemlí malo!*" ("There is not enough land"); and one notices that those who look a little ahead ask anxiously: "What is to become of our children? Already the Communal allotment is too small for our wants, and the land outside is doubling and trebling in price! What will it be in the future?"

Must we, then, accept for Russia the Malthus doctrine that population increases more rapidly than the means of subsistence, and that starvation can be avoided only by

EUROPEAN
RUSSIA
SHOWING
DENSITY OF POPULATION
British Statute Miles
Russian Versts
Railways
ARCTIC OCEAN
KARA SEA
Nova Zemlya
Kolguev I.
Kara Sea
Waigatz I.
Kola Peninsula
White Sea
Arkhangel
Gulf of Finland
ST PETERSBURG
Vologda
Vyatka
Perm
SIBERIA
Ural Mts.
Kazan
Nizhni Novgorod
Moscow
Tula
Orel
Kursk
Kharkov
Saratov
Samara
Orenburg
Ufa
Astrakhan
Mouths of the Volga
Caspian Sea
Sea of Azov
Crimea
Sevastopol
Odessa
Kherson
Nikolaev
Ekaterinoslav
Caucasus Mountains
Tiflis
Batoum
Kutais
Poti
Sukhum
Derbent
Baku
Elisabethpol
Erivan
Kars
Erzerum
Trebizond
Kuban
Terek
Caucasia
Kuma
Manych
Kalmuck Steppe
Ural R.
Ural Mts.
Plateau
Aral Sea
Lake Baikal
BLACK SEA
ASIA MINOR
PERSIA
GERMANY
AUSTRIA HUNGARY
ROUMANIA
BULGARIA
Carpathian Mts.
REFERENCE
Over 80 Inhabitants to the Sq. Verst*
From 40 to 80 ,,
From 20 to 40 ,,
From 10 to 20 ,,
From 5 to 10 ,,
From 2½ to 5 ,,
Under 2½ Inhabitants
*1 Sq. Verst=0·44 Sq. Mile
Over 400,000 Inhabitants
From 100,000 to 400,000
From 50,000 to 100,000
From 20,000 to 50,000
Under 20,000 Inhabitants
Longitude East 40 of Greenwich

plague, pestilence, war, and other destructive forces? I think not. It is quite true that, if the amount of land actually possessed by the peasantry and the present system of cultivating it remained unchanged, semi-starvation would be the inevitable result within a comparatively short space of time; but the danger can be averted, and the proper remedies are not far to seek. If Russia is suffering from over-population it must be her own fault, for she is, with the exception of Norway and Sweden, the most thinly populated country in Europe, and she has more than her share of fertile soil and mineral resources.

A glance at the map showing the density of population in the various provinces suggests an obvious remedy, and I am happy to say it is already being applied. The population of the congested districts of the centre is gradually spreading out, like a drop of oil on a sheet of soft paper, towards the more thinly populated regions of the south and east. In this way the vast region containing millions of acres which lies to the north of the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian, and Central Asia is yearly becoming more densely peopled, and agriculture is steadily encroaching on the pastoral area. Breeders of sheep and cattle, who formerly lived and throve in the western portion of that great expanse, are being pushed eastwards by the rapid increase in the value of land, and their place is being taken by enterprising tillers of the soil. Farther north another stream of emigration is flowing into Central Siberia. It does not flow so rapidly, because in that part of the Empire, unlike the bare, fertile Steppes of the south, the land has to be cleared before the seed can be sown, and the pioneer colonists have to work hard for a year or two before they get any return for their labour; but the Government and private societies come to their assistance, and for the last twenty years their numbers have been steadily increasing. In 1886 the annual contingent was only about 25,000 souls, whereas in 1908 it reached the high figure of 626,000. Roughly speaking, we may say that during the last fifteen years more than three and a half million peasants from European Russia have been successfully settled in the Asiatic provinces.

Even in the European portion of the Empire millions of acres which are at present unproductive might be utilised. Anyone who has travelled by rail from Berlin to St. Petersburg must have noticed how the landscape suddenly changes its character as soon as he has crossed the frontier. Leaving a prosperous agricultural country, he traverses for many weary hours a region in which there is hardly a sign of human habitation, though the soil and climate of that region resemble closely the soil and climate of East Prussia. The difference lies in the amount of labour and capital expended. According to official statistics the area of European Russia contains, roughly speaking, 406 millions of *dessyatins*, of which 78 millions, or 19 per cent., are classified as *neudobniya*, unfit for cultivation; 157 millions, or 39 per cent., as forest; 106 millions, or 26 per cent., as arable land; and 65 millions, or 16 per cent., as pasturage. Thus the arable and pasture land compose only 42 per cent., or considerably less than half, of the area. Of the land classed as unfit for cultivation—19 per cent. of the whole—a large portion, including the perennially frozen *tundri* of the far north, must ever remain unproductive; but in latitudes with a milder climate this category of land is for the most part ordinary morass or swamp, which can be transformed into pasturage, or even into arable land, by drainage at a moderate cost. As a proof of this statement I may cite the draining of the great Pinsk swamps, which was begun by the Government in 1872. If we may trust an official report of the progress of the works in 1897, an area of 2,855,000 *dessyatins* (more than seven and a half million acres) had been drained at an average cost of about three shillings an acre, and the price of land had risen from four to twenty-eight roubles per *dessyatin*.

Reclamation of marshes might be undertaken elsewhere on a much more moderate scale. The observant traveller on the highways and byways of the northern provinces must have noticed on the banks of almost every stream many acres of marshy land producing merely reeds or coarse, rank grass that no well-brought-up animal would look at. With a little elementary knowledge of engineering and the expenditure of a moderate amount of manual labour these marshes might

be converted into excellent pasture or even into highly productive kitchen gardens; but the peasants have not yet learned to take advantage of such opportunities, and the reformers, who generally deal only in large projects and scientific panaceas for the cure of impoverishment, consider such trifles as unworthy of their attention. The Scotch proverb that if the pennies be well looked after, the pounds will look after themselves, contains a bit of homely wisdom unknown to the Russian educated classes.

After the morasses, swamps, and marshes come the forests, constituting 39 per cent. of the whole area, and the question naturally arises whether some portions of them might not be advantageously transformed into pasturage or arable land. In the south and east they have been diminished to such an extent as to affect the climate injuriously, so that the forest area in that part of the country ought to be increased rather than lessened; but in the northern provinces the vast expanses of forest, covering millions of acres, might perhaps be curtailed with advantage. The proprietors prefer, however, to keep them in their present condition because they give a modest revenue without any expenditure of capital.

Therein lies the great obstacle to land reclamation in Russia: it requires an outlay of capital, and capital is extremely scarce in the Empire of the Tsars. Until it becomes more plentiful, the area of arable land and pasturage is not likely to be largely increased, and other means of checking the impoverishment of the peasantry must be adopted.

A less expensive means is suggested by the statistics of foreign trade. In the preceding chapter we have seen that from 1860 to 1900 the average annual export of grain rose steadily from under 1½ millions to over 6 millions of tons. It is evident, therefore, that in the food supply, so far from there being a deficiency, there has been a large and constantly increasing surplus. If the peasantry have been on short rations, it is not because the quantity of food produced has fallen short of the requirements of the population, but because it has been unequally distributed. The truth is that the large landed proprietors produce more and the

peasants less than they consume, and it has naturally occurred to many people that the present state of things might be improved if a portion of the arable land passed, without any socialistic, revolutionary measures, from the one class to the other.

This operation, as we have seen above, has already begun and is proceeding rapidly with the aid of the Peasant Land-Bank, but the process is too slow to meet all the requirements of the situation. Some additional expedient, therefore, must be found, and we naturally look for it in the experience of older countries with a denser population.

In the more densely populated countries of Western Europe a safety valve for the inordinate increase of the rural population has been provided by the development of manufacturing industry. High wages and the attractions of town life draw the rural population to the industrial centres, and the movement has increased to such an extent that already complaints are heard of the rural districts becoming depopulated. In Russia a similar movement is taking place on a smaller scale. During the last fifty years, under the fostering influence of a protective tariff, the manufacturing industry has made gigantic strides, as we shall see in a future chapter, and it has already absorbed about two millions of the redundant hands in the villages; but it cannot keep pace with the rapidly increasing surplus. Two millions constitute but a small factor in a population of 160 millions. The great mass of the people has always been, and must long continue to be, purely agricultural; and it is to their fields that they must look for the means of subsistence. If the fields do not supply enough for their support under the existing primitive methods of cultivation better methods must be adopted. To use a favourite semi-scientific phrase, Russia has now reached the point in her economic development at which she must abandon her traditional *extensive* system of agriculture and adopt a more *intensive* system. So far all competent authorities are agreed. But how is the transition, which requires technical knowledge, a spirit of enterprise, an enormous capital, and a dozen other things which the peasantry do not at present possess, to be effected? Here begin the well-marked differences of opinion.

Hitherto the momentous problem has been dealt with chiefly by the theorists and doctrinaires, who delight in radical solutions by means of panaceas, and who have little taste for detailed local investigation and gradual improvement. I do not refer merely to the so-called "Saviours of the Fatherland" (*Spasíteli Otétchestva*), well-meaning cranks and visionaries who discover ingenious devices for making their native country at once prosperous and happy. I speak of the great majority of reasonable, educated men who devote some attention to the problem. Their favourite method of dealing with it is this: The intensive system of agriculture requires scientific knowledge and a higher level of intellectual culture. What has to be done, therefore, is to create agricultural colleges supplied with all the newest appliances of agronomic research and to educate the peasantry to such an extent that they may be able to use the means which science recommends.

For many years this doctrine prevailed in the Press, among the reading public, and even in the official world. The Government was accordingly urged to improve and multiply the agronomic colleges and the schools of all grades and descriptions. Learned dissertations were published on the chemical constitution of the various soils, the action of the atmosphere on the different ingredients, the necessity of making careful meteorological observations, and numerous other topics of a similar kind; and would-be reformers who had no taste for such highly technical researches could console themselves with the idea that they were advancing the vital interests of the country by discussing the relative merits of Communal and personal land tenure—deciding generally in favour of the former as more in accordance with the peculiarities of Russian, as contrasted with West-European, principles of economic and social development.

While much valuable time and energy were thus being expended to little purpose, on the assumption that the old system might be left untouched until the preparations for a radical solution had been completed, disagreeable facts which could not be entirely overlooked gradually produced in influential quarters the conviction that the question was much more urgent than was commonly supposed. A

sensitive chord in the heart of the Government was struck by the steadily increasing arrears of taxation, and spasmodic attempts have since been made to cure the evil. In the local administration, too, the urgency of the question has come to be recognised, and measures are now being taken by the Zemstvo to help the peasantry in making gradually the transition to that higher system of agriculture which is the only means of permanently saving them from starvation. For this purpose, in many districts, well-trained specialists have been appointed to study the local conditions and to recommend to the villagers such simple improvements as are within their means. These improvements may be classified under the following heads:—

(1) Increase of the cereal crops by better seed and improved implements.

(2) Change in the rotation of crops by the introduction of certain grasses and roots which improve the soil and supply food for live stock.

(3) Improvement and increase of live stock, so as to get more labour-power, more manure, more dairy produce, and more meat.

(4) Increased cultivation of vegetables and fruit.

With these objects in view the Zemstvo is establishing depots, in which improved implements and better seed are sold at moderate prices, and the payments may be made in instalments, so that even the poorer members of the community can take advantage of the facilities offered. Bulls and stallions are kept at central points for the purpose of improving the breed of cattle and horses, and the good results are already visible. Elementary instruction in farming and gardening is being introduced into the primary schools. In some districts the exertions of the Zemstvo are supplemented by small agricultural societies, mutual credit associations, and village banks, and these are to some extent assisted by the Central Government. But the beneficent action in this direction is not all official. Many proprietors deserve great praise for the good influence which they exercise on the peasants of their neighbourhood and the assistance they give them; and it must be admitted that their patience is often sorely tried, for the peasants have the

obstinacy of ignorance, and possess other qualities which are not sympathetic. I know one excellent proprietor who began his civilising efforts by giving to the *Mir* of the nearest village an iron plough as a model and a fine pedigree ram as a producer, and who found, on returning from a tour abroad, that during his absence the plough had been sold for vodka, and the pedigree ram had been eaten before it had time to produce any descendants! In spite of this he continues his efforts, and not altogether without success.

It need hardly be said that the progress of the peasantry is not so rapid as could be wished. The muzhik is naturally conservative, and is ever inclined to regard novelties with suspicion. Even when he is half convinced of the utility of some change, he has still to think about it for a long time and talk it over again and again with his friends and neighbours, and this preparatory stage of progress may last for years. Unless he happens to be a man of unusual intelligence and energy, it is only when he sees with his own eyes that some humble individual of his own condition in life has actually gained by abandoning the old routine and taking to new courses, that he makes up his mind to take the plunge himself. Still, he is beginning to jog on. *E pur si muove!* A spirit of progress is beginning to move on the face of the long-stagnant waters, and progress once begun is pretty sure to continue with increasing rapidity. With starvation hovering in the rear, even the most conservative are not likely to stop or turn back.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE ZEMSTVO AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

AFTER the emancipation of the serfs, the reform most urgently required was the improvement of the provincial administration. In the time of serfage the Emperor Nicholas, referring to the landed proprietors, used to say in a jocular tone that he had in his Empire 50,000 most zealous and efficient hereditary police-masters. By the Emancipation Law the authority of these hereditary police-masters was for ever abolished, and it became urgently necessary to put something else in its place. Peasant self-government was accordingly organised on the basis of the rural Commune; but it fell far short of meeting the requirements of the situation. Its largest unit was the *Vólost*, which comprised merely a few contiguous Communes, and its action was confined exclusively to the peasantry. Evidently it was necessary to create a larger administrative unit, in which the interests of all classes of the population could be attended to, and for this purpose Alexander II., in November, 1859, more than a year before the Emancipation Edict, instructed a special Commission to prepare a project for giving to the inefficient, dislocated provincial administration greater unity and independence. The project was duly prepared, and after being discussed in the Council of State it received the Imperial sanction in January, 1864. It was supposed to give, in the words of an explanatory memorandum, "as far as possible a complete and logical development to the principle of local self-government." Thus was created the Zemstvo,* which has attracted considerable attention in Western Europe.

My personal acquaintance with this interesting institution

* The term Zemstvo is derived from the word *Zemlyá*, meaning land, and might be translated, if a barbarism were permissible, by Land-dom, on the analogy of Kingdom, Dukedom, etc.

dates from 1870. Very soon after my arrival at Novgorod in that year, I made the acquaintance of a gentleman who was described to me as "the president of the provincial Zemstvo bureau," and finding him amiable and communicative, I suggested that he might give me some information regarding the institution of which he was the chief local representative. With the utmost readiness he proposed to be my Mentor, introduced me to his colleagues, and invited me to come and see him at his office as often as I felt inclined. Of this invitation I made abundant use. At first my visits were discreetly few and short, but when I found that my new friend and his colleagues really wished to instruct me in all the details of Zemstvo administration, and had arranged a special table in the president's room for my convenience, I became a regular attendant, and spent daily several hours in the bureau, studying the current affairs, and noting down the interesting bits of statistical and other information which came before the members, as if I had been one of their number. When they went to inspect the hospital, the lunatic asylum, the seminary for the preparation of village schoolmasters, or any other Zemstvo institution, they invariably invited me to accompany them, and made no attempt to conceal from me any defects which they happened to discover.

I mention all this because it illustrates the readiness of most Russians to afford every possible facility to a foreigner who wishes seriously to study their country. They believe that they have long been misunderstood and systematically calumniated by foreigners, and they are extremely desirous that the prevalent misconceptions regarding their country should be removed. It must be said to their honour that they have little or none of that false patriotism which seeks to conceal national defects; and in judging themselves and their institutions they are inclined to be over-severe rather than unduly lenient. In the time of Nicholas I. those who desired to stand well with the Government proclaimed loudly that they lived in the happiest and best-governed country of the world, but this shallow official optimism has long since gone out of fashion. During all the years which I spent in Russia I found everywhere the utmost readiness to assist

me in my investigations, and very rarely noticed that habit of "throwing dust in the eyes of foreigners" of which some writers have spoken so much.

The Zemstvo is a kind of local administration which supplements the action of the rural Communes, and takes cognisance of those higher public wants which individual Communes cannot possibly satisfy. Its principal duties are to keep the roads and bridges in proper repair, to provide means of conveyance for the rural police and other officials, to look after primary education and sanitary affairs, to watch the state of the crops and take measures against approaching famine, and, in short, to undertake, within certain clearly defined limits, whatever seems likely to increase the material and moral well-being of the population. In form the institution is Parliamentary—that is to say, it consists of an assembly of deputies which meets regularly once a year, and of a permanent executive bureau elected by the Assembly from among its members. If the Assembly be regarded as a local Parliament, the bureau corresponds to the Cabinet. In accordance with this analogy my friend the president was sometimes jocularly termed the Prime Minister. Once every three years the deputies are elected in certain fixed proportions by the landed proprietors, the rural Communes, and the municipal corporations. Every province (*gubérniya*) and each of the districts (*uyézdy*) into which the province is subdivided has such an assembly and such a bureau.

Not long after my arrival in Novgorod I had the opportunity of being present at a District Assembly. In the ballroom of the "Club de la Noblesse" I found thirty or forty men seated round a long table covered with green cloth. Before each member lay sheets of paper for the purpose of taking notes, and before the president—the Marshal of Noblesse for the district—stood a small hand-bell, which he rang vigorously at the commencement of the proceedings and on all occasions when he wished to obtain silence. To the right and left of the president sat the members of the executive (*uprávа*), armed with piles of written and printed documents, from which they read long and tedious extracts, till the majority of the audience took to yawning and one or two of the members positively went

to sleep. At the close of each of these reports the president rang his bell—presumably for the purpose of awakening the sleepers—and inquired whether anyone had remarks to make on what had just been read. Generally someone had remarks to make, and not unfrequently a discussion ensued. When any decided difference of opinion appeared, a vote was taken by handing round a sheet of paper, or by the simpler method of requesting the Ayes to stand up and the Noes to sit still.

What surprised me most in this assembly was that it was composed partly of nobles and partly of peasants—the latter being decidedly in the majority—and that no trace of antagonism seemed to exist between the two classes. Landed proprietors and their *ci-devant* serfs, emancipated only ten years before, evidently met for the moment on a footing of equality. The discussions were carried on chiefly by the nobles, but on more than one occasion peasant members rose to speak, and their remarks, always clear, practical, and to the point, were invariably listened to with respectful attention. Instead of that violent antagonism which might have been expected, considering the constitution of the Assembly, there was too much unanimity—a fact indicating plainly that the majority of the members did not take a very deep interest in the matters presented to them.

This assembly for the district was held in the month of September. At the beginning of December the Assembly for the Province met, and during nearly three weeks I was daily present at its deliberations. In general character and mode of procedure it resembled closely the District Assembly. Its chief peculiarities were that its members were chosen, not by the primary electors, but by the assemblies of the ten districts which compose the province, and that it took cognisance merely of those matters which concerned more than one district. Besides this, the peasant deputies were very few in number—a fact which somewhat surprised me, because I was aware that, according to the law, the peasant members of the District Assemblies were eligible, like those of the other classes. The explanation is that the District Assemblies choose their most active members to represent them in the Provincial Assemblies, and consequently the choice generally falls on landed proprietors. To this arrange-

ment the peasants make no objection, for attendance at the Provincial Assemblies demands a considerable pecuniary outlay, and payment of the deputies is expressly prohibited by law.

To give the reader an idea of the elements composing this assembly, let me introduce him to a few of the members. A considerable section of them may be described in a single sentence. They are commonplace men, who have spent part of their youth in the public service as officers in the army, or officials in the civil administration, and have since retired to their estates, where they gain a modest competence by farming. Some of them add to their agricultural revenues by acting as justices of the peace.* A few may be described more particularly.

You see there, for instance, that fine-looking old general in uniform, with the St. George's Cross at his button-hole —an order given only for bravery in the field. That is Prince Suvórov, a grandson of the famous field-marshal who won victories for the Empress Catherine. He has filled high posts in the Administration without ever tarnishing his name by a dishonest or dishonourable action, and has spent a great part of his life at Court without ceasing to be frank, generous, and truthful. Though he has no intimate knowledge of current affairs, and sometimes gives way a little to drowsiness, his sympathies in disputed points are always on the right side, and when he gets to his feet he always speaks in a clear, soldier-like fashion.

The tall gaunt man, somewhat over middle age, who sits a little to the left is Prince Vassíltchikov. He, too, has an historical name, but he cherishes above all things personal independence, and has consequently always kept aloof from the Imperial Administration and the Court. The leisure thus acquired he has devoted to study, and he has produced several valuable works on political and social science. An enthusiastic but at the same time cool-headed abolitionist at the time of the Emancipation, he has since constantly striven to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry by advocating the spread of primary education, the establish-

* That is no longer possible. The institution of justices elected and paid by the Zemstvo was abolished in 1889.

ment of rural credit associations in the villages, the preservation of the Communal institutions, and numerous important reforms in the financial system. Both of these gentlemen, it is said, generously gave to their peasants more land than they were obliged to give by the Emancipation Law. In the Assembly Prince Vassíltchikov speaks frequently, and always commands attention; and of all important committees he is a leading member. Though a warm defender of the Zemstvo institutions, he thinks that their activity ought to be confined to a comparatively narrow field, and he thereby differs from some of his colleagues, who are ready to embark in hazardous, not to say fanciful, schemes for developing the natural resources of the province. His neighbour, Mr. P——, is one of the ablest and most energetic members of the Assembly. He is president of the executive bureau in one of the districts, where he has founded many primary schools and created several rural credit associations on the model of those which bear the name of Schultze Delitsch in Germany. Mr. S——, who sits beside him, was for some years an arbiter between the proprietors and emancipated serfs, then a member of the Provincial Executive Bureau, and is now director of a bank in St. Petersburg.

To the right and left of the president—who is Marshal of Noblesse for the province—sit the members of the bureau. The gentleman who reads the long reports is my friend "the Prime Minister," who began life as a cavalry officer, and after a few years of military service retired to his estate; he is an intelligent, able administrator, and a man of considerable literary culture. His colleague, who assists him in reading the reports, is a merchant, and director of the municipal bank. The next member is also a merchant, and in some respects the most remarkable man in the room. Though born a serf, he is already, at middle age, an important personage in the Russian commercial world. Rumour says that he laid the foundation of his fortune by one day purchasing a copper cauldron in a village through which he was passing on his way to St. Petersburg, where he hoped to gain a little money by the sale of some calves. In the course of a few years he amassed an enormous fortune; but cautious people think that he is too fond of hazardous

speculations, and prophesy that he will end life as poor as he began it.

All these men belong to what may be called the party of progress, which anxiously supports all proposals recognised as "liberal," and especially all measures likely to improve the condition of the peasantry. Their chief opponent is that little man with close-cropped, bullet-shaped head and small piercing eyes, who may be called the Leader of the Opposition. He condemns many of the proposed schemes, on the ground that the province is already overtaxed, and that the expenditure ought to be reduced to the smallest possible figure. In the District Assembly he preaches this doctrine with considerable success, for there the peasantry form the majority, and he knows how to use that terse, homely language, interspersed with proverbs, which has far more influence on the rustic mind than scientific principles and logical reasoning; but here, in the Provincial Assembly, his following composes only a respectable minority, and he confines himself to a policy of obstruction.

The Zemstvo of Novgorod had at that time the reputation of being one of the most enlightened and energetic, and I must say that the proceedings were conducted in a business-like, satisfactory way. The reports were carefully considered, and each article of the annual budget was submitted to minute scrutiny and criticism. In several of the provinces which I afterwards visited I found that affairs were conducted in a very different fashion: quorums were formed with extreme difficulty, and the proceedings, when they at last commenced, were treated as mere formalities and despatched as speedily as possible. The character of the Assembly depends, of course, on the amount of interest taken in local public affairs. In some districts this interest is considerable; in others it is very near zero.

The birth of this new institution in 1864 was hailed with enthusiasm, and produced great expectations. At that time a large section of the Russian educated classes had a simple, convenient criterion for institutions of all kinds. They assumed as a self-evident axiom that the excellence of an institution must always be in proportion to its "liberal"

and democratic character. The question as to how far it might be appropriate to the existing conditions and to the character of the people, and as to whether it might not, though admirable in itself, be too expensive for the work to be performed, was little thought of. Any organisation which rested on "the elective principle," and provided an arena for free public discussion, was sure to be well received, and these conditions were fulfilled by the Zemstvo.

The expectations excited were of various kinds. People who thought more of political than economic progress saw in the Zemstvo the basis of boundless popular liberty. Prince Vassíltchikov, for example, though naturally of a phlegmatic temperament, became for a moment enthusiastic, and penned the following words: "With a daring unparalleled in the chronicles of the world, we have entered on the career of public life." If local self-government in England had, in spite of its aristocratic character, created and preserved political liberty, as had been proved by several learned Germans, what might be expected from institutions so much more liberal and democratic? In England there had never been county parliaments, and the local administration had always been in the hands of the great landowners; whilst in Russia every district would have its elective assembly, in which the peasant would be on a level with the richest landed proprietors. People who were accustomed to think of social rather than political progress expected that they would soon see the country provided with good roads, safe bridges, numerous village schools, well-appointed hospitals, and all the other requisites of civilisation. Agriculture would become more scientific, trade and industry would be rapidly developed, and the material, intellectual, and moral condition of the peasantry would be enormously improved. The listless apathy of provincial life and the hereditary indifference to local public affairs were now, it was thought, about to be dispelled; and in view of this change, patriotic mothers took their children to the annual assemblies in order to accustom them from their early years to take an interest in the public welfare.

It is hardly necessary to say that these inordinate expectations were not realised. From the very beginning there

had been a misunderstanding regarding the character and functions of the new institutions. During the short period of universal enthusiasm for reform, the great officials had used incautiously some of the vague liberal phrases then in fashion, but they never seriously intended to confer on the child which they were bringing into the world a share in the general government of the country; and the rapid evaporation of their sentimental liberalism, which began as soon as they undertook practical reforms, made them less and less conciliatory. When the vigorous young child, therefore, showed a natural desire to go beyond the humble functions accorded to it, the stern parents proceeded to snub it and put it into its proper place. The first reprimand was administered publicly in the capital. The St. Petersburg Provincial Assembly, having shown a desire to play a political part, was promptly closed by the Minister of the Interior, and some of the members were exiled for a time to their homes in the country.

This warning produced merely a momentary effect. As the functions of the Imperial Administration and of the Zemstvo had never been clearly defined, and as each was inclined to extend the sphere of its activity, friction became frequent. The Zemstvo had the right, for example, to co-operate in the development of education, but as soon as it organised primary schools and seminaries it came into contact with the Ministry of Public Instruction. In other departments similar conflicts occurred, and the *tchinóvniks* came to suspect that the Zemstvo had the ambition to play the part of a parliamentary Opposition. This suspicion found formal expression in at least one secret official document, in which the writer declares that "the Opposition has built itself firmly a nest in the Zemstvo." Now, if we mean to be just to both parties in this little family quarrel, we must admit that the Zemstvo, as I shall explain in a future chapter, had ambitions of that kind, and it would have been better perhaps for the country at the present moment if it had been able to realise them. But this is a West-European idea. In Russia there is, and can be, no such thing as "His Majesty's Opposition." To the Russian official mind the three words seem to contain a logical contradiction.

Opposition to officials, even within the limits of the law, is equivalent to opposition to the Autocratic Power, of which they are the incarnate emanations; and opposition to what they consider the interests of autocracy comes within measurable distance of high treason. It was considered necessary, therefore, to curb and suppress the ambitious tendencies of the wayward child, and accordingly it was placed more and more under the tutelage of the provincial Governors.

To show how the change was effected, let me give an illustration. In the older arrangements the Governor could suspend the action of the Zemstvo only on the ground of its being illegal or *ultra vires*, and when there was an irreconcilable difference of opinion between the two parties, the question was decided judicially by the Senate; under the more recent arrangements his Excellency can interpose his veto whenever he considers that a decision, though it may be perfectly legal, is not conducive to the public good, and differences of opinion are referred, not to the Senate, but to the Minister of the Interior, who is always naturally disposed to support the views of his subordinate.

In order to put an end to all this insubordination Count Tolstoy, the reactionary Minister of the Interior in the reign of Alexander III., prepared a scheme of reorganisation in accordance with his anti-liberal views, but he died before he could carry it out, and a much milder reorganisation was adopted in the law of June 24th, 1890. The principal changes introduced by that law were that the number of delegates in the Assemblies was reduced by about a fourth, and the relative strength of the different social classes was altered. Under the old law the Noblesse had about 42 per cent. and the peasantry about 38 per cent. of the seats; by the new electoral arrangements the former have 57 per cent. and the latter about 30. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the Assemblies are more conservative or more subservient on that account. Liberalism and insubordination are much more likely to be found among the nobles than among the peasants.

In addition to all this, as there was an apprehension in the higher official spheres of St. Petersburg that the oppo-

sition spirit of the Zemstvo might find public expression in a printed form, the provincial Governors received extensive rights of preventive censure with regard to the publication of the minutes of Zemstvo Assemblies and similar documents.

What the bureaucracy, in its zeal to defend the integrity of the Autocratic Power, feared most of all was combination for a common purpose on the part of the Zemstvos of different provinces. It vetoed, therefore, all such combinations, even for statistical purposes; and when it discovered, on one occasion, that leading members of the Zemstvo from all parts of the country were holding private meetings in Moscow for the ostensible purpose of discussing economic questions, it ordered them to return to their homes.

Even within its proper sphere, as defined by law, the Zemstvo has not accomplished what was expected of it. The country has not been covered with a network of macadamised roads, and the bridges are by no means as safe as could be desired. Village schools and infirmaries are still far below the requirements of the population. Little or nothing has been done for the development of trade or manufactures; and the villages remain very much what they were under the old Administration. Meanwhile the local rates have been rising with alarming rapidity; and many people draw from all this the conclusion that the Zemstvo is a worthless institution which has increased the taxation without conferring any corresponding benefit on the country.

If we take as our criterion in judging the institution the exaggerated expectations at first entertained, we may feel inclined to agree with this conclusion, but this is merely tantamount to saying that the Zemstvo has performed no miracles. Russia is much poorer and much less densely populated than the more advanced nations which she takes as her model. To suppose that she could at once create for herself by means of an administrative reform all the conveniences which those more advanced nations enjoy, was as absurd as it would be to imagine that a poor man can at once construct a magnificent palace because he has received from a wealthy neighbour the necessary architectural plans. Not only years, but generations, must pass before Russia can assume the appearance of Germany,

France, or England. The metamorphosis may be accelerated or retarded by good government, but it could not be effected at once, even if the combined wisdom of all the philosophers and statesmen in Europe were employed in legislating for the purpose.

The Zemstvo has, however, done much more than the majority of its critics admit. It fulfils tolerably well, without scandalous peculation and jobbery, its commonplace, every-day duties, and it has created a new and more equitable system of rating by which landed proprietors and house-owners are made to bear their share of the public burdens. It has done a very great deal to provide medical aid and primary education for the common people, and it has improved wonderfully the condition of the hospitals, lunatic asylums, and other benevolent institutions committed to its charge. In its efforts to aid the peasantry it has helped to improve the native breeds of horses and cattle, and it has created a system of obligatory fire insurance, together with means for preventing and extinguishing fires in the villages—a most important matter in a country where the peasants live in wooden houses and big fires are fearfully frequent. After neglecting for a good many years the essential question as to how the peasants' means of subsistence can be increased, it has latterly, as I have mentioned in the foregoing chapter, helped them to obtain improved agricultural implements and better seed, encouraged the formation of small credit associations and savings banks, and appointed agricultural inspectors to teach them how they may introduce modest improvements within their limited means.* At the same time, in many districts it has endeavoured to assist the home industries which are threatened with annihilation by the big factories, and whenever measures have been proposed for the benefit

* The amount expended on these objects in 1897, the latest year for which I have statistical data, was about a million and a half of roubles, or, roughly speaking, £150,000, distributed under the following heads:—

1. Agricultural tuition	£41,100
2. Experimental stations, museums, etc.	19,800
3. Scientific agriculturists	17,400
4. Agricultural industries	26,700
5. Improving breeds of horses and cattle...	45,300
	£150,300

of the rural population, such as the lowering of the land-redemption payments and the creation of the Peasant Land Bank, it has invariably given them its cordial support.

If you ask a zealous member of the Zemstvo why it has not done more he will probably tell you that it is because its activity has been constantly restricted and counteracted by the Government. The Assemblies were obliged to accept as presidents the Marshals of Noblesse, many of whom were men of antiquated ideas and retrograde principles. At every turn the more enlightened, more active members found themselves opposed, thwarted, and finally checkmated by the Imperial officials. When a laudable attempt was made to tax trade and industry more equitably the scheme was vetoed, and consequently the mercantile class, sure of being always taxed at a ridiculously low maximum, have lost all interest in the proceedings. Even with regard to the rating of landed and house property a low limit is imposed by the Government, because it is afraid that if the rates were raised much it would not be able to collect the heavy Imperial taxation. The uncontrolled publicity which was at first enjoyed by the Assemblies was afterwards curtailed by the bureaucracy. Under such restrictions all free, vigorous action, it was said, became impossible, and the institutions failed to effect what was reasonably anticipated. All this is true in a certain sense, but it is not the whole truth. If we examine some of the definite charges brought against the institution we shall understand better its real character.

The most common complaint made against it is that it has enormously increased the rates. On that point there is no possibility of dispute. At first its expenditure in the thirty-four provinces in which it existed was under six millions of roubles; in two years (1868) it had jumped up to fifteen millions; in 1875 it was nearly twenty-eight millions; in 1885 over forty-three millions, and at the end of the century it had attained the respectable figure of 95,800,000 roubles. As each province had the right of taxing itself, the increase varied greatly in different provinces. In Smolensk, for example, it was only about thirty per cent., whilst in Samara it was 436, and in Viatka, where the

peasant element predominates, no less than 1,262 per cent.! In order to meet this increase, the rates on land rose from under ten millions in 1868 to over forty-seven millions in 1900. No wonder that the landowners who find it difficult to work their estates at a profit should complain!

Though this increase is disagreeable to the ratepayers, it does not follow that it is excessive. In all countries rates and local taxation are on the increase, and it is in the backward countries that they increase most rapidly. In France, for example, the average yearly increase has been 2.7 per cent., while in Austria it has been 5.59. In Russia it ought to have been more than in Austria, whereas it has been, in the provinces with Zemstvo institutions, only about four per cent. In comparison with the Imperial taxation the local does not seem excessive when compared with other countries. In England and Prussia, for instance, the State taxation as compared with the local is as a hundred to fifty-four and fifty-one, whilst in Russia it is as a hundred to sixteen.* A reduction in the taxation as a whole would certainly contribute to the material welfare of the rural population, but it is desirable that it should be made in the Imperial taxes rather than in the rates, because the latter may be regarded as something akin to productive investments, whilst the proceeds of the former are expended largely on objects which have little or nothing to do with the wants of the common people. In speaking thus I am assuming that the local expenditure is made judiciously, and this is a matter on which, I am bound to confess, there is by no means unanimity of opinion.

Hostile critics can point to facts which are, to say the least, strange and anomalous. Out of the total of its revenue the Zemstvo spends about twenty-eight per cent. under the heading of public health and benevolent institutions; and about fifteen per cent. for popular education, whilst it devotes only about six per cent. to roads and bridges, and until lately it neglected, as I have said above, the means for improving agriculture and directly increasing the income of the peasantry.

* These figures are taken from the best available authorities, chiefly Schwanebach and Scalon, but I am not prepared to guarantee their accuracy.

Before passing sentence with regard to these charges we must remember the circumstances in which the Zemstvo was founded and has grown up. In the early times its members were well-meaning men who had had very little experience in administration or in practical life of any sort except the old routine in which they had previously vegetated. Most of them had lived enough in the country to know how much the peasants were in need of medical assistance of the most elementary kind, and to this matter they at once turned attention. They tried to organise a system of doctors, hospital assistants, and dispensaries by which the peasant would not have to go more than fifteen or twenty miles to get a wound dressed or to have a consultation or to obtain a simple remedy for an ordinary ailment. They felt the necessity, too, of thoroughly reorganising the hospitals and the lunatic asylums, which were in a very unsatisfactory condition. Plainly enough, there was here good work to be done. Then there were the higher aims. In the absence of practical experience there were enthusiasms and theories. Amongst these was the enthusiasm for education, and the theory that the want of it was the chief reason why Russia had remained so far behind the nations of Western Europe. "Give us education," it was said, "and all other good things will be added thereto. Liberate the Russian people from the bonds of ignorance as you have liberated it from the bonds of serfage, and its wonderful natural capacities will then be able to create everything that is required for its material, intellectual, and moral welfare."

If there was anyone among the leaders who took a more sober, prosaic view of things he was denounced as an ignoramus and a reactionary. Willingly or unwillingly, everybody had to swim with the current. Roads and bridges were not entirely neglected, but the efforts in that direction were confined to the absolutely indispensable. For such prosaic concerns there was no enthusiasm, and it was universally recognised that in Russia the construction of good roads, as the term is understood in Western Europe, was far beyond the resources of any Administration. Of the necessity for such roads few were conscious. All that

was required was to make it *possible* to get from one place to another in ordinary weather and ordinary circumstances. If a stream was too deep to be forded, a bridge had to be built or a ferry had to be established; and if the approach to a bridge was so marshy or muddy that vehicles often sank *quite* up to the axles and had to be dragged out by ropes, with the assistance of the neighbouring villagers, repairs had to be made. Beyond this the efforts of the Zemstvo rarely went. Its road-building ambition remained within very modest bounds.

As for the impoverishment of the peasantry and the necessity for improving their system of agriculture, that question had hardly appeared above the horizon. It might have to be dealt with in the future, but there was no need for hurry. Once the rural population were educated, the question would solve itself. It was not till about the year 1885 that it was recognised to be more urgent than had been supposed, and some Zemstvos perceived that the people might starve before its preparatory education was completed. Repeated famines pushed the lesson home, and the landed proprietors found their revenues diminished by the fall in the price of grain on the European markets. Thus was raised the cry: "Agriculture in Russia is on the decline! The country has entered on an acute economic crisis! If energetic measures be not taken promptly the people will soon find themselves confronted by starvation!"

To this cry of alarm the Zemstvo was neither deaf nor indifferent. Recognising that the danger could be averted only by inducing the peasantry to adopt a more intensive system of agriculture, it directed more and more of its attention to agricultural improvements, and tried to get them adopted.* It did, in short, all it could, according to its lights and within the limits of its moderate resources. Unfortunately, its available resources were small, for it was forbidden by the Government to increase the rates, and it could not well dismiss doctors and close dispensaries and schools when the people were clamouring for more. So at least the defenders of the Zemstvo maintain, and they go so far as to contend that it did well not to grapple with

* *Vide supra*, pp. 556 and 569.

the impoverishment of the peasantry at an earlier period, when the real conditions of the problem and the means of solving it were only very imperfectly known: if it had begun at that time it would have made great blunders and spent much money to little purpose.

However this may be, it would certainly be unfair to condemn the Zemstvo for not being greatly in advance of public opinion. If it endeavours strenuously to supply all clearly recognised wants, that is all that can reasonably be expected of it. What it may be more justly reproached with is, in my opinion, that it is, to a certain extent, imbued with that unpractical, pedantic spirit which is commonly supposed to reside exclusively in the Imperial Administration. But here again it simply reflects public opinion and certain intellectual peculiarities of the educated classes. When a Russian begins to write on a simple everyday subject, he likes to connect it with general principles, philosophy, or history, and begins, perhaps, by expounding his views on the intellectual and social developments of humanity in general and of Russia in particular. If he has sufficient space at his disposal he may even tell you something about the early period of Russian history previous to the Mongol invasion before he gets to the simple matter in hand. In a previous chapter I have described the process of "shedding on a subject the light of science" in Imperial legislation.* In Zemstvo activity we often meet with pedantry of a similar kind.

If this pedantry were confined to the writing of reports it might not do much harm. Unfortunately, it often appears in the sphere of action. To illustrate this I take an instance from the province of Nizhni-Novgorod. The Zemstvo of that province received from the central Government in 1895 a certain amount of capital for road improvement, with instructions from the Ministry of Interior that it should classify the roads according to their relative importance and improve them accordingly. Any intelligent person well acquainted with the region might have made, in the course of a week or two, the required classification accurately enough for all practical purposes. Instead of

* *Vide supra*, pp. 390 and 393.

adopting this simple procedure, what does the Zemstvo do? It chooses one of the eleven districts of which the province is composed, and instructs its statistical department to describe all the villages with a view to determining the amount of traffic which each will probably contribute to the general movement, and then it verifies its a priori conclusions by means of a detachment of specially selected "registrars," posted at all the crossways during six days of each month. These registrars doubtless inscribed every peasant cart as it passed and made a rough estimate of the weight of its load. When this complicated and expensive procedure was completed for one district it was applied to another; but at the end of three years, before all the villages of this second district had been described and the traffic estimated, the energy of the statistical department seems to have flagged, and, like a young author impatient to see himself in print, it published a volume at the public expense which no one will ever read.

The cost entailed by this procedure is not known, but we may form some idea of the amount of time required for the whole operation. It is a simple rule-of-three sum. If it took three years for the preparatory investigation of a district and a half, how many years will be required for eleven districts? More than twenty years! During that period it would seem that the roads are to remain as they are, and when the moment comes for improving them it will be found that, unless the province is condemned to economic stagnation, the "valuable statistical material" collected at such an expenditure of time and money is in great part antiquated and useless. The statistical department will be compelled, therefore, like another unfortunate Sisyphus, to begin the work anew, and it is difficult to see how the Zemstvo, unless it becomes a little more practical, is ever to get out of the vicious circle.

In this case the evil result of pedantry was simply unnecessary delay, and in the meantime the capital was accumulating, unless the interest was entirely swallowed up by the statistical researches; but there are cases in which the consequences are more serious. Let me take an illustration from the enlightened province of Moscow. It was

observed that certain villages were particularly unhealthy, and it was pointed out by a local doctor that the inhabitants were in the habit of using for domestic purposes the water of ponds which were in a filthy condition. What was evidently wanted was good wells, and a practical man would at once have taken measures to have them dug. Not so the District Zemstvo. It at once transformed the simple fact into a "question" requiring scientific investigation. A commission was appointed to study the problem, and after much deliberation it was decided to make a geological survey in order to ascertain the depth of good water throughout the district as a preparatory step towards preparing a project which will some day be discussed in the District Assembly, and perhaps in the Assembly of the province. Whilst all this is being done according to the strict principles of bureaucratic procedure the unfortunate peasants, for whose benefit the investigation was undertaken, continue to drink the muddy water of the dirty ponds.

Incidents of that kind, which I might multiply almost to any extent, remind one of the proverbial formalism of the Chinese; but between Chinese and Russian pedantry there is an essential difference. In the Middle Kingdom the sacrifice of practical considerations proceeds from an exaggerated veneration of the wisdom of ancestors; in the Empire of the Tsars it is due to an exaggerated adoration of the goddess Naúka (Science), and a habit of appealing to abstract principles and scientific methods when only a little plain common sense is required.

The absence of this plain common sense sometimes becomes painfully evident during the debates of the Assemblies, and gives an air of unreality to the proceedings. On one occasion, I remember, in a District Assembly of the province of Riazán, when the subject of primary schools was being discussed, an influential member stood up and proposed that an obligatory system of education should at once be introduced throughout the whole district. Strange to say, the motion was very nearly carried, though all the members present knew—or at least might have known if they had taken the trouble to inquire—that the actual number of schools would have to be multiplied twenty-

fold, and all were agreed that the local rates must not be increased. To preserve his reputation for liberalism, the honourable member further proposed that, though the system should be obligatory, no fines, punishments, or other means of compulsion should be employed. How a system could be obligatory without using some means of compulsion, he did not condescend to explain. To get out of the difficulty, one of his supporters suggested that the peasants who did not send their children to school should be excluded from serving as office-bearers in the Communes; but this proposition merely created a laugh, for many deputies knew that the peasants would regard this supposed punishment as a valuable privilege. And whilst this discussion about the necessity for introducing an ideal system of obligatory education was being carried on, the street before the windows of the room was covered with a stratum of mud nearly two feet in depth! The other streets were in a similar condition; and a large number of the members always arrived late, because it was almost impossible to come on foot, and there was only one public conveyance in the town. Many members had, fortunately, their private conveyances, but even in these locomotion was by no means easy. One day, in the principal thoroughfare, a member had his *tarantass* overturned, and he himself was thrown into the mud!

It is hardly fair to compare the Zemstvo with the older institutions of a similar kind in Western Europe, and especially with our own local self-government. Our institutions have all grown out of real, practical wants, keenly felt by a large section of the population. Cautious and conservative in all that concerns the public welfare, we regard change as a necessary evil, and put off the evil day as long as possible, even when convinced that it must inevitably come. Thus our administrative wants are always in advance of our means for satisfying them, and we use vigorously those means as soon as they are supplied. Our method of supplying the means, too, is peculiar. Instead of making a *tabula rasa*, and beginning from the foundations, we utilise to the utmost what we happen to possess, and add merely what is absolutely indispensable. Metaphorically speaking, we repair and

extend our political edifice according to the changing necessities of our mode of life, without paying much attention to abstract principles or the contingencies of the distant future. The building may be an æsthetic monstrosity, belonging to no recognised style of architecture, and built in defiance of the principles laid down by philosophical art critics, but it is well adapted to our requirements, and every hole and corner of it is sure to be utilised.

Very different has been the political history of Russia during the last two centuries. It may be briefly described as a series of revolutions effected peaceably by the Autocratic Power. Each young energetic sovereign has attempted to inaugurate a new epoch by thoroughly remodelling the Administration according to the most approved foreign political philosophy of the time. Institutions have not been allowed to grow spontaneously out of popular wants, but have been invented by bureaucratic theorists to satisfy wants of which the people were often still unconscious. The administrative machine has therefore derived little or no motive force from the people, and has always been kept in motion by the unaided energy of the central Government. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the repeated attempts of the Government to lighten the burdens of centralised administration by creating organs of local self-government should not have been very successful.

The Zemstvo, it is true, offered better chances of success than any of its predecessors. A large portion of the nobles had become alive to the necessity for improving the Administration, and the popular interest in public affairs was much greater than at any former period. Hence there was at first a period of enthusiasm, during which great preparations were made for future activity, and not a little was actually effected. The institution had all the charm of novelty, and the members felt that the eyes of the public were upon them. For a time all went well, and the Zemstvo was so well pleased with its own activity that the satirical journals compared it to Narcissus admiring his image reflected in the pool. But when the charm of novelty had passed and the public turned its attention to other matters, the spasmodic energy evaporated, and many of the most

active members looked about for more lucrative employment. Such employment was easily found, for at that time there was an unusual demand for able, energetic, educated men. Several branches of the civil service were being reorganised, and railways, banks, and joint-stock companies were being rapidly multiplied. With these the Zemstvo had great difficulty in competing. It could not, like the Imperial service, offer pensions, decorations, and prospects of promotion, nor could it pay such large salaries as the commercial and industrial enterprises. In consequence of all this, the quality of the executive bureaux deteriorated at the same time as the public interest in the institution diminished.

To be just to the Zemstvo I must add that, with all its defects and errors, it is infinitely better than the institutions which it replaced. If we compare it with previous attempts to create local self-government, we must admit that the Russians have made great progress in their political education. What its future may be I do not venture to predict. From its infancy it has had, as we have seen, the ambition to play a great political part, and in 1904-5, when the disasters in the Far East were raising a storm of popular indignation against the Government, its leading representatives in conclave assembled took upon themselves to express what they considered the national demand for liberal representative institutions. The desire, which had previously from time to time been expressed timidly and vaguely in loyal addresses to the Tsar, that a central Zemstvo Assembly, bearing the ancient title of Zemski Sobór, should be convoked in the capital and endowed with political functions, was now put forward by the representatives in plain unvarnished form. This desire, as we shall see in the sequel, was not realised, but the impetus given to the reform movement at that time by the Zemstvo Liberals contributed largely to the creation of the Duma.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE REFORM OF THE LAW COURTS

AFTER serf-emancipation and local self-government, the subject which demanded most urgently the attention of reformers was the judicial organisation, which had sunk to a depth of inefficiency and corruption difficult to describe.

In early times the dispensation of justice in Russia, as in other States of a primitive type, had a thoroughly popular character. The State was still in its infancy, and the duty of defending the person, the property, and the rights of individuals lay, of necessity, chiefly on the individuals themselves. Self-help formed the basis of the judicial procedure, and the State merely assisted the individual to protect his rights and to avenge himself on those who voluntarily infringed them.

By the rapid development of the Autocratic Power all this was changed. Autocracy endeavoured to drive and regulate the social machine by its own unaided force, and regarded with suspicion and jealousy all spontaneous action in the people. The dispensation of justice was accordingly appropriated by the central authority, absorbed into the Administration, and withdrawn from public control. Themis retired from the market-place, shut herself up in a dark room from which the contending parties and the public gaze were rigorously excluded, surrounded herself with secretaries and scribes who put the rights and claims of the litigants into whatever form they thought proper, weighed according to her own judgment the arguments presented to her by her own servants, and came forth from her seclusion merely to present a ready-made decision or to punish the accused whom she considered guilty.

This change, though perhaps to some extent necessary, was attended with very bad consequences. Freed from the control of the contending parties and of the public, the

courts acted as uncontrolled human nature generally does. Injustice, extortion, bribery and corruption assumed gigantic proportions, and against these evils the Government found no better remedy than a system of complicated formalities and ingenious checks. The judicial functionaries were hedged in by a multitude of regulations, so numerous and complicated that it seemed impossible for even the most unjust judge to swerve from the path of uprightness. Explicit, minute rules were laid down for investigating facts and weighing evidence; every scrap of evidence and every legal ground on which the decision was based were committed to writing; every act in the complicated process of coming to a decision was made the subject of a formal document, and duly entered in various registers; every document and register had to be signed and countersigned by various officials who were supposed to control each other; every decision might be carried to a higher court and made to pass a second time through the bureaucratic machine. In a word, the legislature introduced a system of formal written procedure of the most complicated kind, in the belief that by this means mistakes and dishonesty would be rendered impossible.

It may be reasonably doubted whether this system of judicial administration can anywhere give satisfactory results. It is everywhere found by experience that in tribunals from which the healthy atmosphere of publicity is excluded justice languishes, and a great many ugly plants shoot up with wonderful vitality. Languid indifference, an indiscriminating spirit of routine, and unblushing dishonesty too often creep in through the little chinks and crevices of the barrier raised against them, and no method of hermetically sealing these chinks and crevices has yet been invented. The attempt to close them up by increasing the formalities and multiplying the courts of appeal and revision merely adds to the tediousness of the procedure, and withdraws the whole process still more completely from public control. At the same time the absence of free discussion between the contending parties renders the task of the judge enormously difficult. If the system is to succeed at all, it must provide a body of able, intelligent, thoroughly trained

jurists, and must place them beyond the reach of bribery and other forms of corruption.

In Russia neither of these conditions was fulfilled. Instead of endeavouring to create a body of well-trained jurists, the Government went farther and farther in the direction of letting the judges be chosen for a short period by popular election from among men who had never received a juridical education, or a fair education of any kind; whilst the place of judge was so poorly paid, and stood so low in public estimation, that the temptations to dishonesty were difficult to resist.

The practice of choosing the judges by popular election was an attempt to restore to the courts something of their old popular character; but it did not succeed, for very obvious reasons. Popular election in a judicial organisation is useful only when the courts are public and the procedure simple; on the contrary, it is positively prejudicial when the procedure is in writing and extremely complicated. And so it proved in Russia. The elected judges, unprepared for their work, and liable to be changed at short intervals, rarely acquired a knowledge of law or procedure. They were for the most part poor, indolent landed proprietors, who did little more than sign the decisions prepared for them by the permanent officials. Even when a judge happened to have some legal knowledge he found small scope for its application, for he rarely, if ever, examined personally the materials out of which a decision was to be elaborated. The whole of the preliminary work, which was in reality the most important, was performed by minor officials under the direction of the secretary of the court. In criminal cases, for instance, the secretary examined the written evidence—all evidence was taken down in writing—extracted what he considered the essential points, arranged them as he thought proper, quoted the laws which ought in his opinion to be applied, put all this into a report, and read the report to the judges. Of course the judges, if they had no personal interest in the decision, accepted the secretary's view of the case. If they did not, all the preliminary work had to be done anew by themselves—a task that few judges were able, and still fewer willing, to perform. Thus the decision lay virtually in the

hands of the secretary and the minor officials, and in general neither the secretary nor the minor officials were fit persons to have such power.

There is no need to detail here the ingenious expedients by which they increased their meagre salaries, and how they generally contrived to extract money from both parties.* Suffice it to say that in general the chancelleries of the courts were dens of pettifogging rascality, and the habitual, unblushing bribery had a negative as well as a positive effect. If a person accused of some crime had no money wherewith to grease the palm of the secretary he might remain in prison for years without being brought to trial. A well-known Russian writer once related to me that when visiting a prison in the province of Nizhni-Novgorod he found among the inmates undergoing preliminary arrest two peasant women, who were accused of setting fire to a hayrick to revenge themselves on a landed proprietor, a crime for which the legal punishment was from four to eight months' imprisonment. One of them had a son of seven years of age, and the other a son of twelve, both of whom had been born in the prison, and had lived there ever since among the criminals. Such a long preliminary arrest caused no surprise or indignation among those who heard of it, because it was quite a common occurrence. Everyone knew that bribes were taken not only by the secretary and his scribes, but also by the judges, who were elected by the local Noblesse from its own ranks.

With regard to the scale of punishments, notwithstanding some humanitarian principles in the legislation, they were very severe, and corporal punishment played amongst them a disagreeably prominent part. Capital sentences were abolished as early as 1753-54, but castigation with the knout, which often ended fatally, continued until 1845, when it was replaced by flogging in the civil administration, though retained for the military and for insubordinate convicts. For the non-privileged classes the knout or the lash supplemented nearly all punishments for criminal offences. When a man

* Old book-catalogues sometimes mention a play bearing the significant title, "The Unheard-of Wonder; or, The Honest Secretary" (*Neslýkhannoe Tchudo ili Tchestny Sekretár*). I have never seen this curious production, but I have no doubt that it referred to the peculiarities of the old judicial procedure.

was condemned, for example, to penal servitude, he received publicly from thirty to one hundred lashes, and was then branded on the forehead and cheeks with the letters K.A.T. —the first three letters of *kátorzhnik* (convict). If he appealed he received his lashes all the same, and if his appeal was rejected by the Senate he received some more castigation for having troubled unnecessarily the higher judicial authorities. For the military and for insubordinate convicts there was a barbarous punishment called *Spitsruten*, to the extent of 5,000 or 6,000 blows, which often ended in the death of the unfortunate.

The use of torture in criminal investigations was formally abolished in 1801, but if we may believe the testimony of a public prosecutor, it was occasionally used in Moscow as late as 1850.

The defects and abuses of the old system were so flagrant that they became known even to the Emperor Nicholas I., and caused him momentary indignation, but he never attempted seriously to root them out. In 1844, for example, he heard of some gross abuses in a tribunal not far from the Winter Palace, and ordered an investigation. Baron Korff, to whom the investigation was entrusted, brought to light what he called "a yawning abyss of all possible horrors, which have been accumulating for years," and his Majesty, after reading the report, wrote upon it with his own hand: "Unheard-of disgrace! The carelessness of the authority immediately concerned is incredible and unpardonable. I feel ashamed and sad that such disorder could exist almost under my eyes and remain unknown to me." Unfortunately the outburst of Imperial indignation did not last long enough to produce any remedial consequences. The only result was that one member of the tribunal was dismissed from the service, and the Governor-General of St. Petersburg had to resign, but the latter subsequently received an honorary reward, and the Emperor remarked that he was himself to blame for having kept the Governor-General so long at his post.

When His Majesty's habitual optimism happened to be troubled by incidents of this sort he probably consoled himself with remembering that he had ordered some prepara-

tory work, by which the administration of justice might be improved, and this work was being diligently carried out in the legislative section of his own chancery by Count Bludov, one of the ablest Russian lawyers of his time. Unfortunately, the existing state of things was not thereby improved, because the preparatory work was not of the kind that was wanted. On the assumption that any evil which might exist could be removed by improving the laws, Count Bludov devoted his efforts almost entirely to codification. In reality, what was required was to change radically the organisation of the courts and the procedure, and above all to let in on their proceedings the cleansing atmosphere of publicity. This the Emperor Nicholas could not understand, and if he had understood it he could not have brought himself to adopt the appropriate remedies, because radical reform and control of officials by public opinion were his two pet bugbears.

Very different was his son and successor, Alexander II., in the first years of his reign. In his accession manifesto a prominent place was given to his desire that justice and mercy should reign in the courts of law. Referring to these words in a later manifesto, he explained his wishes more fully as "the desire to establish in Russia expeditious, just, merciful, impartial courts of justice for all our subjects; to elevate the judicial authority; to give it the proper independence, and in general to implant in the people that respect for the law which ought to be the constant guide of all and everyone from the highest to the lowest." These were not mere vain words. Peremptory orders had been given that the great work should be undertaken without delay, and when the Emancipation question was being discussed in the Provincial Committees, the Council of State examined the question of judicial reform "from the historical, the theoretical, and the practical point of view," and came to the conclusion that the existing organisation must be completely transformed.

The commission appointed to consider this important matter filed a lengthy indictment against the existing system, and pointed out no less than twenty-five radical defects. To remove these it proposed that the judicial organisation should

be completely separated from all other branches of the Administration; that the most ample publicity, with trial by jury in criminal cases, should be introduced into the tribunals; that Justice of Peace Courts should be created for petty affairs; and that the procedure in the ordinary courts should be greatly simplified.

These fundamental principles were published by Imperial command on September 29th, 1862—a year and a half after the publication of the Emancipation Manifesto—and on November 20th, 1864, the new legislation founded on these principles received the Imperial sanction.

Like most institutions erected on a *tabula rasa,* the new system is at once simple and symmetrical. As a whole, the architecture of the edifice is decidedly French, but here and there we may detect unmistakable symptoms of English influence. It is not, however, a servile copy of any older edifice; and it may be fairly said that, though every individual part was fashioned according to a foreign model, the whole has a certain originality.

The lower part of the building in its original form was composed of two great sections, distinct from, and independent of, each other—on the one hand the Justice of Peace Courts, and on the other the Regular Tribunals. Both sections contained an Ordinary Court and a Court of Appeal. The upper part of the building, covering equally both sections, was the Senate as Supreme Court of Revision (*Cour de Cassation*).

The distinctive character of the two independent sections may be detected at a glance. The function of the Justice of Peace Courts is to decide petty cases that involve no abstruse legal principles, and to settle, if possible by conciliation, those petty conflicts and disputes which arise naturally in the relations of everyday life; the function of the Regular Tribunals is to take cognisance of those graver affairs in which the fortune or honour of individuals or families is more or less implicated, or in which the public tranquillity is seriously endangered. The two kinds of courts were organised in accordance with these intended functions. In the former the procedure is simple and conciliatory, the jurisdiction is confined to cases of little importance, and the

judges were at first chosen by popular election, generally from among the local inhabitants. In the latter there is more of "the pomp and majesty of the law." The procedure is more strict and formal, the jurisdiction is unlimited with regard to the importance of the cases, and the judges are trained jurists nominated by the Emperor.

The Justice of Peace Courts received jurisdiction over all obligations and civil injuries in which the sum at stake was not more than 500 roubles—about £50—and all criminal affairs in which the legal punishment did not exceed 300 roubles—about £30—or one year of imprisonment. When anyone had a complaint to make, he might go to the Justice of the Peace (*Mirovói Sudyá*) and explain the affair orally, or in writing, without observing any formalities; and if the complaint seemed well founded, the Justice at once fixed a day for hearing the case, and gave the other party notice to appear at the appointed time. When the time appointed arrived, the affair was discussed publicly and orally, either by the parties themselves, or by any representatives whom they might appoint. If it was a civil suit, the Justice began by proposing to the parties to terminate it at once by a compromise, and indicated what he considered a fair arrangement. Many affairs were terminated in this simple way. If, however, either of the parties refused to consent to a compromise, the matter was fully discussed, and the Justice gave a formal written decision, containing the grounds on which it was based. In criminal cases the amount of punishment was always determined by reference to a special Criminal Code.

If the sum at issue exceeded thirty roubles—about £3—or if the punishment exceeded a fine of fifteen roubles—about 30s.—or three days of arrest, an appeal might be made to the Assembly of Justices (*Mirovói Syezd*). This is a point in which English rather than French institutions were taken as a model. According to the French system, all appeals from a Juge de Paix are made to the "Tribunal d'Arrondissement," and the Justice of Peace Courts are thereby subordinated to the Regular Tribunals. According to the English system, certain cases may be carried on appeal from the Justice of the Peace to the Quarter Sessions. This latter

principle was adopted and greatly developed by the Russian legislation. The Monthly Sessions, composed of all the Justices of the District (*uyézd*), considered appeals against the decisions of the individual Justices. The procedure was simple and informal, as in the lower court, but an assistant of the Procureur was always present. This functionary gave his opinion in some civil and in all criminal cases immediately after the debate, and the Court took his opinion into consideration in framing its judgment.

In the other great section of the judicial organisation—the Regular Tribunals—there are likewise Ordinary Courts and Courts of Appeal, called respectively "Tribunaux d'Arrondissement" (*Okruzhniye Sūdý*) and "Palais de Justice" (*Sudêbniya Paláty*). Each Ordinary Court has jurisdiction over several Districts (*uyézdy*), and the jurisdiction of each Court of Appeal comprehends several Provinces. All civil cases are subject to appeal, however small the sum at stake may be, but criminal cases are decided *finally* by the lower court with the aid of a jury. Thus in criminal affairs the "Palais de Justice" is not at all a court of appeal, but as no regular criminal prosecution can be raised without its formal consent, it controls in some measure the action of the lower courts.

As the general reader cannot be supposed to take an interest in the details of civil procedure, I shall merely say on this subject that in both sections of the Regular Tribunals the cases are always tried by at least three judges, the sittings are public, and oral debates by officially recognised advocates form an important part of the proceedings. I venture, however, to speak a little more at length regarding the change which has been made in the criminal procedure—a subject that is less technical and more interesting for the uninitiated.

Down to the time of the recent judicial reforms the procedure in criminal cases was, as I have said above, secret and inquisitorial. The accused had little opportunity for defending himself, but, on the other hand, the State took endless formal precautions against condemning the innocent. The practical consequence of this system was that an innocent man might remain for years in prison until the authorities

convinced themselves of his innocence, whilst a clever criminal might indefinitely postpone his condemnation.

In studying the history of criminal procedure in foreign countries, those who were entrusted with the task of preparing projects of reform found that nearly every country of Europe had experienced the evils from which Russia was suffering, and that one country after another had come to the conviction that the most efficient means of removing these evils was to replace the inquisitorial by litigious procedure, to give a fair field and no favour to the prosecutor and the accused, and allow them to fight out their battle with whatever legal weapons they might think fit. Further, it was discovered that, according to the most competent foreign authorities, it was well in this modern form of judicial combat to leave the decision to a jury of respectable citizens. The steps which Russia had to take were thus clearly marked out by the experience of other nations, and it was decided that they should be taken at once. The organs for the prosecution of supposed criminals were carefully separated from the judges on the one hand, and from the police on the other; oral discussions between the Public Prosecutor and the prisoner's counsel, together with oral examination and cross-questioning of witnesses, were introduced into the procedure; and the jury was made an essential factor in criminal trials.

When a case, whether civil or criminal, has been decided in the Regular Tribunals, there is no possibility of appeal in the strict sense of the term, but an application may be made for a revision of the case on the ground of technical informality. To use the French terms, there cannot be *appel*, but there may be *cassation*. According to the new Russian system, the sole Court of Revision is the Senate.

The Senate thus forms the regulator of the whole judicial system, but its action is merely regulative. It takes cognisance only of what is presented to it, and supplies to the machine no motive power. If any of the lower courts should work slowly or cease to work altogether, the Senate might remain ignorant of the fact, and certainly could take no official notice of it. It was considered necessary, therefore, to supplement the spontaneous vitality of the lower courts,

and for this purpose was created a special centralised judicial administration, at the head of which was placed the Minister of Justice. The Minister is "Procureur-Général," and has subordinates in all the courts. The primary function of this administration is to preserve the force of the law, to detect and repair all infractions of judicial order, to defend the interests of the State and of those persons who are officially recognised as incapable of taking charge of their own affairs, and to act in criminal matters as Public Prosecutor.

Viewed as a whole, and from a little distance, this grand judicial edifice seems perfectly symmetrical, but a closer and more minute inspection brings to light unmistakable indications of a change of plan during the process of construction. Though the work lasted only about half-a-dozen years, the style of the upper differs from the style of the lower parts, precisely as in those Gothic cathedrals which grew up slowly during the course of centuries. And there is nothing here that need surprise us, for a considerable change took place in the opinions of the official world during that short period. The reform was conceived at a time of uncritical enthusiasm for advanced liberal ideas, of boundless faith in the dictates of science, of unquestioning reliance on public spirit, public control, and public honesty—a time in which it was believed that the public would spontaneously do everything necessary for the common weal, if it were only freed from the administrative swaddling clothes in which it had been hitherto bound. Still smarting from the severe régime of Nicholas, men thought more about protecting the rights of the individual than about preserving public order, and under the influence of the socialistic ideas in vogue, malefactors were regarded as the unfortunate, involuntary victims of social inequality and injustice.

Towards the end of the period in question all this had begun to change. Many were beginning to perceive that liberty might easily turn to licence, that the spontaneous public energy was largely expended in empty words, and that a certain amount of hierarchical discipline was necessary in order to keep the public administration in motion. It was found, therefore, in 1864, that it was impossible to carry out to their ultimate consequences the general principles laid

down and published in 1862. Even in those parts of the legislation which were actually put in force, it was found necessary to make modifications in an indirect, covert way. Of these, one may be cited by way of illustration. In 1860 criminal inquiries were taken out of the hands of the police, and transferred to "Juges d'Instruction" (*Sudébniye Slêdovateli*), who were almost entirely independent of the Public Prosecutor, and could not be removed unless condemned for some legal transgression by a Regular Tribunal. This reform created at first much rejoicing and great expectations, because it raised a barrier against the tyranny of the police and against the arbitrary power of the higher officials. But very soon the defects of the system became apparent. Many *juges d'instruction,* feeling themselves independent and knowing that they would not be prosecuted except for some flagrantly illegal act, gave way to indolence, and spent their time in inactivity.* In such cases it was always difficult, and sometimes impossible, to procure a condemnation—for indolence must assume gigantic proportions in order to become a crime—and the Minister had to adopt the practice of appointing, without Imperial confirmation, temporary *juges d'instruction* whom he could remove at pleasure.

It is unnecessary, however, to enter into these theoretical defects. The important question for the general public is: How do the institutions work in the local conditions in which they are placed?

This is a question which has an interest not only for Russians, but for all students of social science, for it tends to throw light on the difficult subject as to how far institutions may be successfully transplanted to a foreign soil. Many thinkers hold, and not without reason, that no institution can work well unless it is the natural product of previous historical development. Now we have here an opportunity of testing this theory by experience; we have even what Bacon terms an *experimentum crucis.* This new judicial system is an artificial creation constructed in accordance with principles laid down by foreign jurists. All that the elaborators of the project said about developing old institutions

* A flagrant case of this kind came under my own observation.

was mere talk. In reality, they made a *tabula rasa* of the existing organisation. If the introduction of public oral procedure and trial by jury was a return to ancient customs, it was a return to what had been long since forgotten by all except antiquarian specialists, and no serious attempt was made to develop what actually existed. One form, indeed, of oral procedure had been preserved in the Code, but it had fallen completely into disuse, and seems to have been overlooked by the elaborators of the new system.*

Having in general little confidence in institutions which spring ready-made from the brains of autocratic legislators, I expected to find that this new judicial organisation, which looks so well on paper, was wellnigh worthless in reality. Observation, however, has not confirmed my pessimistic expectations. On the contrary, I have found that these new institutions, though they are very far from being perfect, even in the human sense of the term, work on the whole remarkably well, and have already conferred immense benefit on the country.

In the course of a few years the Justice of Peace Courts, which may perhaps be called the newest part of the new institutions, became thoroughly acclimatised as if they had existed for generations. As soon as they were opened they became extremely popular. In Moscow the authorities had calculated that under the new system the number of cases would be more than doubled, and that on an average each justice would have nearly a thousand cases brought before him in the course of the year. The reality far exceeded their expectations: each justice had on an average 2,800 cases. In St. Petersburg and the other large towns the amount of work which the justices had to get through was equally great.

To understand the popularity of the Justice of Peace Courts, we must know something of the old police courts which they supplanted. The nobles, the military, and the small officials had always looked on the police with contempt, because their position secured them against inter-

* I refer to the so-called *Sūd po formě*, established by an ukaz of Peter the Great, in 1723. I was much astonished when I accidentally stumbled upon it in the Code.

ference, and the merchants acquired a similar immunity by submitting to blackmail, which often took the form of a fixed subsidy; but the lower classes in town and country stood in fear of the humblest policeman, and did not dare to complain of him to his superiors. If two workmen brought their differences before a police court, instead of getting their case decided on grounds of equity they were pretty sure to get scolded in language unfit for ears polite, or to receive still worse treatment. Even among the higher officers of the force many became famous for their brutality. A *Gorodnitchi* of the town of Tcherkassy, for example, made for himself in this respect a considerable reputation. If any humble individual ventured to offer an objection to him, he had at once recourse to his fists, and any reference to the law put him into a state of frenzy. "The town," he was wont to say on such occasions, "has been entrusted to me by his Majesty, and you dare to talk to me of the law? There is the law for you!"—the remark being accompanied with a blow. Another officer of the same type, long resident in Kief, had a somewhat different method of maintaining order. He habitually drove about the town with a Cossack escort, and when anyone of the lower classes had the misfortune to displease him, he ordered one of his Cossacks to apply a little corporal punishment on the spot without any legal formalities.

In the Justice of Peace Courts things were conducted in a very different style. The justice, always scrupulously polite without distinction of persons, listened patiently to the complaint, tried to arrange the affair amicably, and when his efforts failed, gave his decision at once according to law and common sense. No attention was paid to rank or social position. A general who would not conform to the police regulations was fined like an ordinary workman, and in a dispute between a great dignitary and a man of the people the two were treated in precisely the same way. No wonder such courts became popular among the masses; and their popularity was increased when it became known that the affairs were disposed of expeditiously, without unnecessary formalities and without any bribes or blackmail. Many peasants regarded the justice as they had been wont to

regard kindly proprietors of the old patriarchal type, and brought their griefs and sorrows to him in the hope that he would somehow alleviate them. Often they submitted most intimate domestic and matrimonial concerns, of which no court could possibly take cognisance, and sometimes they demanded the fulfilment of contracts which were in flagrant contradiction not only to the written law, but also to ordinary morality.*

Of course, the courts were not entirely without blemishes. In the matter, for example, of making no distinction of persons, some of the early justices, in seeking to avoid Scylla, came dangerously near to Charybdis. Imagining that their mission was to eradicate the conceptions and habits which had been created and fostered by serfage, they sometimes used their authority for giving lessons in philanthropic liberalism, and took a malicious delight in wounding the susceptibilities, and occasionally even the material interests, of those whom they regarded as enemies to the good cause. In disputes between master and servant, or between employer and workmen, the justice of this type considered it his duty to resist the tyranny of capital, and was apt to forget his official character of judge in his assumed character of social reformer. Happily, these aberrations on the part of the justices are already things of the past, but they helped to bring about a reaction, as we shall see presently.

The extreme popularity of the Justice of Peace Courts did not last very long. Their history resembled that of the Zemstvo and many other new institutions in Russia: at first, enthusiasm and inordinate expectations; then consciousness of defects and practical inconveniences; and, lastly, in an influential section of the public, the pessimism of shattered illusions, accompanied by the adoption of a reactionary policy on the part of the Government. The discontent appeared first among the so-called privileged classes. To people who had all their lives enjoyed great social consideration it seemed monstrous that they should be treated exactly on the same footing as the muzhik. When a general, for

* Many curious instances of this have come to my knowledge, but they are of such a kind that they cannot be quoted in a work intended for the general public.

example, who was accustomed to be addressed as "Your Excellency," was accused of using abusive language to his cook, and found himself seated on the same bench with the menial, he naturally supposed that the end of all things was at hand. Similarly, a great civil official, who was accustomed to regard the police as created merely for the lower classes, was greatly scandalised when he suddenly found himself, to his inexpressible astonishment, fined for a contravention of police regulations! Naturally the justices were accused of dangerous revolutionary tendencies, and when they happened to bring to light some injustices on the part of the *tchinóvniks* they were severely condemned for undermining the prestige of the Imperial authority!

For a time the accusations provoked merely a smile or a caustic remark among the Liberals, but about the middle of the 'eighties criticisms began to appear even in the Liberal Press. No very grave allegations were made, but defects in the system and miscarriages of justice were put forward and severely commented upon. Occasionally it happened that a justice was indolent, or that at the Sessions in a small country town it was impossible to form a quorum on the appointed day. Overlooking the good features of the institution and the good services rendered by it, the critics, especially those in the reactionary camp, began to propose partial reorganisation in the sense of greater control by the central authorities. It was suggested, for example, that the President of Sessions should be appointed by the Government, that the justices should be subordinated to the Regular Tribunals, and that the principle of election by the Zemstvo should be abolished.

These complaints were not at all unwelcome to the Government, because it had embarked on a reactionary policy, and in 1889 it suddenly granted to the critics a great deal more than they desired. In the rural districts of Central Russia the justices were replaced by the rural supervisors, of whom I have spoken in a previous chapter, and the part of their functions which could not well be entrusted to those new officials was transferred to judges of the Regular Courts. In some of the larger towns and in the rural districts of outlying provinces the justices were preserved, but instead of

being elected by the Zemstvo they were nominated by the Government.

The Regular Tribunals likewise became acclimatised in an incredibly short space of time. The first judges were not by any means profound jurists, and were too often deficient in that dispassionate calmness which we are accustomed to associate with the Bench; but they were at least honest, educated men, and generally possessed a fair knowledge of the law. Their defects were due to the fact that the demand for trained jurists far exceeded the supply, and the Government was forced to nominate men who, under ordinary circumstances, would never have thought of presenting themselves as candidates. At the beginning of 1870, in the 32 "Tribunaux d'Arrondissement" which then existed, there were 227 judges, of whom 44 had never received a judicial education. Even the presidents had not all passed through a school of law. Of course the courts could not become thoroughly effective until all the judges were men who had received a good special education, and had a practical acquaintance with judicial matters. This has now been effected, and the present generation of judges are better prepared and more capable than their predecessors. On the score of probity I have never heard any complaints.

Of all the judicial innovations, perhaps the most interesting is the jury.

At the time of the reforms the introduction of the jury into the judicial organisation awakened among the educated classes a great amount of sentimental enthusiasm. The institution had the reputation of being "liberal," and was known to be approved of by the latest authorities in criminal jurisprudence. This was sufficient to insure it a favourable reception, and to excite most exaggerated expectations as to its beneficent influence. Ten years of experience somewhat cooled this enthusiasm, and voices might be heard declaring that the introduction of the jury was a mistake. The Russian people, it was held, was not yet ripe for such an institution, and numerous anecdotes were related in support of this opinion. One jury, for instance, was said to have returned a verdict of "*not* guilty with extenuating circumstances"; and another, being unable to come to a decision,

was reported to have cast lots before an Icon, and to have given a verdict in accordance with the result! Besides this, juries often gave a verdict of "not guilty" when the accused made a full and formal confession to the court.

How far the comic anecdotes are true I do not undertake to decide, but I venture to assert that such incidents, if they really occur, are too few to form the basis of a serious indictment. The fact, however, that juries often acquit prisoners who openly confess their crime is beyond all possibility of doubt.

To most Englishmen this fact will probably seem sufficient to prove that the introduction of the institution was at least premature, but before adopting this sweeping conclusion, it will be well to examine the phenomenon a little more closely in connection with Russian criminal procedure as a whole.

In England the Bench is allowed very great latitude in fixing the amount of punishment. The jury can therefore confine themselves to the question of fact and leave to the judge the appreciation of extenuating circumstances. In Russia the position of the jury is different. The Russian criminal law fixes minutely the punishment for each category of crimes, and leaves very little latitude to the judges. The jury know that if they give a verdict of guilty, the prisoner will inevitably be punished according to the Code. Now the Code, borrowed in great part from foreign legislation, is founded on conceptions very different from those of the Russian people, and in many cases it attaches heavy penalties to acts which the ordinary Russian is wont to regard as mere peccadilloes, or positively justifiable. Even in those matters in which the Code is in harmony with the popular morality, there are many exceptional cases in which *summum jus* is really *summa injuria*. Suppose, for instance—as actually happened in a case which came under my notice—that a fire breaks out in a village, and that the Village Elder, driven out of patience by the apathy and laziness of some of his young fellow-villagers, oversteps the limits of his authority as defined by law, and accompanies his reproaches and exhortations with a few lusty blows. Surely such a man is not guilty of a very heinous crime—certainly he is not in the opinion of the peasantry—and yet if he be prosecuted and

convicted he inevitably falls into the jaws of an article of the Code which condemns to transportation for a long term of years.

In such cases what are the jury to do? In England they might safely give a verdict of guilty, and leave the judge to take into consideration all the extenuating circumstances; but in Russia they cannot act in this way, for they know that the judge must condemn the prisoner according to the Criminal Code. There remains, therefore, but one issue out of the difficulty—a verdict of acquittal; and Russian juries—to their honour be it said—generally adopt this alternative. Thus the jury, in those very cases in which it is most severely condemned, provides a corrective for the injustice of the criminal legislation. Occasionally, it is true, they go a little too far in this direction and arrogate to themselves a right of pardon, but cases of that kind are, I believe, very rare. I know of only one well-authenticated instance. The prisoner had been proved guilty of a serious crime, but it happened to be the eve of a great religious festival, and the jury thought that in pardoning the prisoner and giving a verdict of acquittal, they would be acting as good Christians!

The legislation, of course, regards this practice as an abuse, and has tried to prevent it by concealing as far as possible from the jury the punishment that awaits the accused if he be condemned. For this purpose it forbids the counsel for the prisoner to inform the jury what punishment is prescribed by the Code for the crime in question. This ingenious device not only fails in its object, but has sometimes a directly opposite effect. Not knowing what the punishment will be, and fearing that it may be out of all proportion to the crime, the jury sometimes acquit a criminal whom they would condemn if they knew what punishment would be inflicted. And when a jury is, as it were, entrapped, and finds that the punishment is more severe than it supposed, it can take its revenge in the succeeding cases. I know at least of one instance of this kind. A jury convicted a prisoner of an offence which it regarded as very trivial, but which in reality entailed, according to the Code, seven years of penal servitude! So surprised and frightened were the jurymen by this unexpected consequence of their

verdict, that they obstinately acquitted, in the face of the most convincing evidence, all the other prisoners brought before them.

The most famous case of acquittal when there was no conceivable doubt as to the guilt of the accused was that of Vera Zasulitch, who shot General Trepov, Prefect of St. Petersburg; but the circumstances were so peculiar that they will hardly support any general conclusion. I happened to be present, and watched the proceedings closely. Vera Zasulitch, a young woman who had for some time taken part in the revolutionary movement, heard that a young revolutionist called Bogoliubov, imprisoned in St. Petersburg, had been flogged by orders of General Trepov,* and though she did not know the victim personally she determined to avenge the indignity to which he had been subjected. With this intention she appeared at the Prefecture, ostensibly for the purpose of presenting a petition, and when she found herself in the presence of the Prefect she fired a revolver at him, wounding him seriously, but not mortally. At the trial the main facts were not disputed, and yet the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty. This unexpected result was due, I believe, partly to a desire to make a little political demonstration, and partly to a strong suspicion that the prison authorities, in carrying out the Prefect's orders, had acted in summary fashion without observing the tedious formalities prescribed by the law. Certainly one of the prison officials, when under cross-examination, made on me, and on the public generally, the impression that he was prevaricating in order to shield his superiors.

At the close of the proceedings, which were dexterously conducted by counsel in such a way that, as the Emperor is reported to have said, it was not Vera Zasulitch, but General Trepov, who was being tried, an eminent Russian journalist rushed up to me in a state of intense excitement and said: "Is not this a great day for the cause of political freedom in Russia?" I could not agree with him, and I

* The reason alleged by General Trepov for giving these orders was that, during a visit of inspection, Bogoliubov had behaved disrespectfully towards him, and had thereby committed an infraction of prison discipline, for which the law prescribes the use of corporal punishment.

ventured to predict that neither of us would ever again see a political case tried publicly by jury in an ordinary court. The prediction has proved true. Since that time political offenders have been tried by special tribunals without a jury, or dealt with "by administrative procedure"—that is to say, inquisitorially, without any regular trial.

The defects, real and supposed, of the present system are commonly attributed to the predominance of the peasant element in the juries; and this opinion, founded on a priori reasoning, seems to many too evident to require verification. The peasantry are in many respects the most ignorant class, and therefore, it is assumed, they are least capable of weighing conflicting evidence. Plain and conclusive as this reasoning seems, it is in my opinion erroneous. The peasants have, indeed, little education, but they have a large fund of plain common sense; and experience proves—so at least I have been informed by many judges and Public Prosecutors—that, as a general rule, a peasant jury is more to be relied on than a jury drawn from the educated classes. It must be admitted, however, that a peasant jury has certain peculiarities, and it is not a little interesting to observe what those peculiarities are.

In the first place, a jury composed of peasants generally acts in a somewhat patriarchal fashion, and does not always confine its attention to the evidence and the arguments adduced at the trial. The members form their judgment as men do in the affairs of ordinary life, and are sure to be greatly influenced by any jurors who happen to be personally acquainted with the prisoner. If several of the jurors know him to be a bad character, he has little chance of being acquitted, even though the chain of evidence against him should not be quite perfect. Peasants cannot understand why a notorious scoundrel should be allowed to escape because a little link in the evidence is wanting, or because some little judicial formality has not been duly observed. Indeed, their ideas of criminal procedure in general are extremely primitive. The Communal method of dealing with malefactors is best in accordance with their conceptions of well-regulated society. Until recently the *Mir* could, by a Communal decree and without a formal trial, have any of

its unruly members transported to Siberia. This summary, informal mode of procedure seems to the peasants very satisfactory. They are at a loss to understand how a notorious culprit is allowed to "buy" an advocate to defend him, and are very insensible to the bought advocate's eloquence. To many of them, if I may trust to conversations which I have casually overheard in and around the courts, "buying an advocate" seems to be very much the same kind of operation as bribing a judge.

In the second place, the peasants, when acting as jurors, are very severe with regard to crimes against property. In this they are instigated by the simple instinct of self-defence. They are, in fact, continually at the mercy of thieves and malefactors. They live in wooden houses easily set on fire; their stables might be broken into by a child; at night the village is guarded merely by an old man, who cannot be in more than one place at a time, and in the one place he is apt to go to sleep; a police officer is rarely seen, except when a crime has actually been committed. A few clever horse-stealers may ruin many families, and a fire-raiser, in his desire to avenge himself on an enemy, may reduce a whole village to destitution. These and similar considerations tend to make the peasants very severe against theft, robbery, and arson; and a Public Prosecutor who desires to obtain a conviction against a man charged with one of these crimes endeavours to have a jury in which the peasant class is largely represented.

With regard to fraud in its various forms, the peasants are much more lenient, probably because the line of demarcation between honest and dishonest dealing in commercial affairs is not very clearly drawn in their minds. Many, for instance, are convinced that trade cannot be successfully carried on without a little clever cheating; and hence cheating is regarded as a venial offence. If the money fraudulently acquired be restored to the owner, the crime is supposed to be completely condoned. Thus when a *Vólost* Elder appropriates the public money, and succeeds in repaying it before the case comes on for trial, he is invariably acquitted—and sometimes even re-elected!

An equal leniency is generally shown by peasants towards

crimes against the person, such as assaults, cruelty, and the like. This fact is easily explained. Refined sensitiveness and a keen sympathy with physical suffering are the result of a certain amount of material well-being, together with a certain degree of intellectual and moral culture, and neither of these is yet possessed by the Russian peasantry. Anyone who has had opportunities of frequently observing the peasants must have been often astonished by their indifference to suffering, both in their own persons and in the persons of others. In a drunken brawl heads may be broken and wounds inflicted without any interference on the part of the spectators. If no fatal consequences ensue, the peasant does not think it necessary that official notice should be taken of the incident, and certainly does not consider that any of the combatants should be transported to Siberia. Slight wounds heal of their own accord without any serious loss to the sufferer, and therefore the man who inflicts them is not to be put on the same level as the criminal who reduces a family to beggary. This reasoning may, perhaps, shock people of sensitive nerves, but it undeniably contains a certain amount of plain, homely wisdom.

Of all kinds of cruelty, that which is perhaps most revolting to civilised mankind is the cruelty of the husband towards his wife; but to this crime the Russian peasant shows especial leniency. He is still influenced by the old conceptions of the husband's rights, and by that low estimate of the weaker sex which finds expression in many popular proverbs.

The peculiar moral conceptions reflected in these facts are evidently the result of external conditions, and not of any recondite ethnographical peculiarities, for they are not found among the merchants, who are nearly all of peasant origin. On the contrary, the merchants are more severe with regard to crimes against the person than with regard to crimes against property. The explanation of this is simple. The merchant has means of protecting his property, and if he should happen to suffer by theft, his fortune is not likely to be seriously affected by it. On the other hand, he has a certain sensitiveness with regard to such crimes as assault; for though he has commonly not much more

intellectual and moral culture than the peasant, he is accustomed to comfort and material well-being, which naturally develop sensitiveness regarding physical pain.

Towards fraud the merchants are quite as lenient as the peasantry. This may, perhaps, seem strange, for fraudulent practices are sure in the long run to undermine trade. The Russian merchants, however, have not yet arrived at this conception, and can point to many of the richest members of their class as a proof that fraudulent practices often create enormous fortunes. Long ago Samuel Butler justly remarked that we damn the sins we have no mind to.

As the external conditions have little or no influence on the religious conceptions of the merchants and the peasantry, the two classes are equally severe with regard to those acts which are regarded as crimes against the Deity. Hence acquittals in cases of sacrilege, blasphemy, and the like, never occur unless the jury is in part composed of educated men.

In their decisions, as in their ordinary modes of thought, the jurors drawn from the educated classes are little, if at all, affected by theological conceptions, but they are sometimes influenced in a not less unfortunate way by conceptions of a different order. It may happen, for instance, that a juror who has passed through one of the higher educational establishments has his own peculiar theory about the value of evidence, or he is profoundly impressed with the idea that it is better that a thousand guilty men should escape than that one innocent man should be punished, or he is imbued with sentimental pseudo-philanthropy, or he is convinced that punishments are useless because they neither cure the delinquent nor deter others from crime; in a word, he may have in some way or other lost his mental balance in that moral chaos through which Russia has lately passed. In England, France, or Germany such an individual would have little influence on his fellow-jurymen, for in these countries there are very few people who allow new paradoxical ideas to overturn their traditional notions and obscure their common sense; but in Russia, where even the elementary moral conceptions are singularly unstable and pliable, a man of this type may succeed in leading a jury.

More than once I have heard men boast of having induced their fellow-jurymen to acquit every prisoner brought before them, not because they believed the prisoners to be innocent or the evidence to be insufficient, but because all punishments are useless and barbarous.

One word in conclusion regarding the independence and political significance of the new courts. When the question of judicial reform was first publicly raised many people hoped that the new courts would receive complete autonomy and real independence, and would thus form a foundation for political liberty. These hopes, like so many illusions of that strange time, have not been realised. A large measure of autonomy and independence was indeed granted in theory. The law laid down the principle that no judge could be removed unless convicted of a definite crime, and that the courts should present candidates for all the vacant places on the Bench; but these and similar rights have little practical significance. If the Minister cannot depose a judge, he can deprive him of all possibility of receiving promotion, and he can easily force him in an indirect way to send in his resignation; and if the courts have still the right to present candidates for vacant places, the Minister has also the right, and can, of course, always secure the nomination of his own candidate. By the influence of that centripetal force which exists in all centralised bureaucracies, the Procureurs have become more important personages than the Presidents of the courts.

From the political point of view the question of the independence of the courts has not yet acquired much practical importance, because the Government can always have political offenders tried by a special tribunal, or can send them to Siberia for an indefinite term of years without regular trial by the "administrative procedure" to which I have above referred.

CHAPTER XXXIV

REVOLUTIONARY NIHILISM AND THE REACTION

THE rapidly increasing enthusiasm for reform after the Crimean War did not confine itself to practical measures such as the emancipation of the serfs, the creation of local self-government, and the thorough reorganisation of the law courts and legal procedure. In the younger section of the educated classes, and especially among the students of the universities and technical colleges, it produced a feverish intellectual excitement and wild aspirations which culminated in what is commonly known as Nihilism.

In a preceding chapter I pointed out that during the last two centuries all the important intellectual movements in Western Europe have been reflected in Russia, and that these reflections have generally been what may fairly be termed exaggerated and distorted reproductions of the originals.* Roughly speaking, the Nihilist movement in Russia may be described as the exaggerated, distorted reflection of the earlier Socialist movements of the West; but it has local peculiarities and local colouring which deserve attention.

The Russian educated classes had been well prepared by their past history for the reception and rapid development of the Socialist virus. For a century and a half the country had been subjected to a series of drastic changes, administrative and social, by the energetic action of the Autocratic Power, with little spontaneous co-operation on the part of the people. In a nation with such a history, Socialistic ideas naturally found favour, because all Socialist systems, until quite recent times, were founded on the assumption that political and social progress must be the result not of slow natural development, but rather of philosophic speculation, legislative wisdom, and administrative energy.

* *See* Chap. XXVI.

This assumption lay at the bottom of the reform enthusiasm in St. Petersburg at the commencement of Alexander II.'s reign. Russia might be radically transformed, it was thought, politically and socially, according to abstract scientific principles, in the space of a few years, and be thereby raised to the level of West-European civilisation, or even higher. The older nations had for centuries groped in darkness, or stumbled along in the faint light of practical experience, and consequently their progress had been slow and uncertain. For Russia there was no necessity to follow such devious, unexplored paths. She ought to profit by the experience of her elder sisters, and avoid the errors into which they had fallen. Nor was it difficult to ascertain what these errors were, because they had been discovered, examined and explained by the most eminent thinkers of France, Germany and England, and efficient remedies had been prescribed. Russian reformers had merely to study and apply the conclusions at which these eminent authorities had arrived, and their task would be greatly facilitated by the fact that they could operate on virgin soil, untrammelled by the feudal traditions, religious superstitions, metaphysical conceptions, romantic illusions, aristocratic prejudices, and similar obstacles to social and political progress which existed in Western Europe.

Such was the extraordinary intellectual atmosphere in which the Russian educated classes lived during the early years of the 'sixties. On "the men with aspirations" who had longed in vain for more light and more public activity under the obscurantist, repressive regime of the preceding reign, it had an intoxicating effect. The more excitable and sanguine amongst them now believed seriously that they had discovered a convenient short cut to national prosperity, and that for Russia a grandiose social and political milennium was at hand.*

In these circumstances it is not surprising that one of the most prominent characteristics of the time was a boundless, child-like faith in the so-called "latest results of

* I was not myself in St. Petersburg at that period, but on arriving a few years afterwards I became intimately acquainted with men and women who had lived through it, and who still retained much of their early enthusiasm.

science." Infallible science was supposed to have found the solution of all political and social problems. What a reformer had to do—and who was not a would-be reformer in those days?—was merely to study the best authorities. Their works had been long rigidly excluded by the Press-censure, and now that it was possible to obtain them, they were read with avidity.

Chief among the new, infallible prophets whose works were profoundly venerated was Auguste Comte, the inventor of Positivism. In his classification of the sciences, the crowning of the edifice was sociology, which taught how to organise human society on scientific principles. Russia had merely to adopt the principles laid down and expounded at great length in the *Cours de Philosophie Positive*. There Comte explained that humanity had to pass through three stages of intellectual development—the religious, the metaphysical, and the positive—and that the most advanced nations, after spending centuries in the two first, were entering on the third. Russia must endeavour, therefore, to get into the positive stage as quickly as possible, and there was reason to believe that, in consequence of certain ethnographical and historial peculiarities, she could make the transition more quickly than other nations. After Comte's works, the book which found, for a time, most favour was Buckle's "History of Civilisation," which seemed to reduce history and progress to a matter of statistics, and which laid down the principle that progress is always in the inverse ratio of the influence of theological conceptions. This principle was regarded as of great practical importance, and the conclusion drawn from it was that rapid national progress was certain if only the influence of religion and theology could be destroyed. Very popular, too, was John Stuart Mill, because he was "imbued with enthusiasm for humanity and female emancipation"; and in his tract on Utilitarianism he showed that morality was simply the crystallised experience of many generations as to what was most conducive to the greatest good of the greatest number. The minor prophets of the time, among whom Büchner occupied a prominent place, are too numerous to mention.

Strange to say, the newest and most advanced doctrines

appeared regularly, under a very thin and transparent veil, in the St. Petersburg daily Press, and especially in the thick monthly magazines, which were as big as, or bigger than, our venerable quarterlies. The art of writing and reading "between the lines," not altogether unknown under the Draconian regime of Nicholas I., was now developed to such a marvellous extent that almost anything could be written clearly enough to be understood by the initiated without calling forth the thunderbolts of the Press-censure, which was now only intermittently severe. Indeed, the Press Censors themselves were sometimes carried away by the reform enthusiasm. One of them long afterwards related to me that during "the mad time," as he called it, in the course of a single year he had received from his superiors no less than seventeen reprimands for passing objectionable articles without remark.

The movement found its warmest partisans among the students and young literary men, but not a few grey-beards were to be found among the youthful apostles. All who read the periodical literature became more or less imbued with the new spirit; but it must be presumed that many of those who discoursed most eloquently had no clear idea of what they were talking about; for even at a later date, when the novices had had time to acquaint themselves with the doctrines they professed, I often encountered the most astounding ignorance. Let me give one instance by way of illustration: A young gentleman who was in the habit of talking glibly about the necessity for scientifically reorganising human society, declared to me one day that not only sociology, but also biology, should be taken into consideration. Confessing my complete ignorance of the latter science, I requested him to enlighten me by giving me an instance of a biological principle which could be applied to social regeneration. He looked confused, and tried to ride out of the difficulty on vague general phrases; but I persistently kept him to the point, and maliciously suggested that as an alternative he might cite to me a biological principle which could *not* be used for such a purpose. Again he failed, and it became evident to all present that of biology, about which he talked so often, he knew absolutely nothing

but the name! After this, I frequently employed the same pseudo-Socratic method of discussion, and very often with a similar result. Not one in fifty, perhaps, ever attempted to reduce the current hazy conceptions to a concrete form. The enthusiasm was not the less intense, however, on that account.

At first the partisans of the movement seemed desirous of assisting, rather than of opposing or undermining, the Government, and so long as they merely talked academically about scientific principles and similar vague entities, the Government felt no necessity for energetic interference; but as early as 1861 symptoms of a change in the character of the movement became apparent. A secret society of officers organised a small printing-press in the building of the Head-quarters Staff and issued clandestinely three numbers of a periodical called the *Velikoruss* (*Great Russian*), which advocated administrative reform, the convocation of a constituent assembly, and the emancipation of Poland from Russian rule. A few months later (April, 1862) a seditious proclamation appeared, professing to emanate from a central revolutionary committee, and declaring that the Románovs must expiate with their blood the misery of the people.

These symptoms of an underground revolutionary agitation caused alarm in the official world, and repressive measures were at once adopted. Sunday schools for the working classes, reading-rooms, students' clubs, and similar institutions which might be used for purposes of revolutionary propaganda were closed; several trials for political offences took place; the most popular of the monthly periodicals, the *Contemporary*, was suspended for a time, and its editor, Tchernishevski, arrested. There was nothing to show that Tchernishevski was implicated in any treasonable designs, but he was undoubtedly the leader of a group of youthful writers whose aspirations went far beyond the intentions of the Government, and it was thought desirable to counteract his influence by shutting him up in prison. Here he wrote and published, with the permission of the authorities and the *imprimatur* of the Press censure, a novel called "Shto delat'?" (What is to be done?), which was regarded at first as a most harmless production, but which

is now considered one of the most influential and baneful works in the whole range of Nihilist literature. As a novel it had no pretensions to artistic merit, and in ordinary times it would have attracted little or no attention, but it put into concrete shape many of the vague Socialist and Communist notions that were at the moment floating about in the intellectual atmosphere, and it came to be looked upon by the young enthusiasts as a sort of informal manifesto of their new-born faith. It was divided into two parts; in the first was described a group of students living according to the new ideas in open defiance of traditional conventionalities, and in the second was depicted a village organised on the communistic principles recommended by Fourier. The first was supposed to represent the dawn of the new era; the second, the goal to be ultimately attained. When the authorities discovered the mistake they had committed in allowing the book to be published, it was at once confiscated and withdrawn from circulation, whilst the author, after being tried by the Senate, was exiled to North-Eastern Siberia and kept there for nearly twenty years.*

With the arrest and exile of Tchernishevski the young would-be reformers were constrained to recognise that they had no chance of carrying the Government with them in their endeavours to realise their patriotic aspirations. Police supervision over the young generation was increased, and all kinds of associations, whether for mutual instruction, mutual aid, or any other purpose, were discouraged or positively forbidden. And it was not merely in the mind of the police that suspicion was aroused. In the opinion of the great majority of moderate, respectable people the young enthusiasts were becoming discredited. The violently

* Tchernishevski was a man of encyclopædic knowledge, and specially conversant with Political Economy. According to the testimony of those who knew him intimately, he was one of the ablest and most sympathetic men of his generation. During his exile a bold attempt was made to rescue him, and very nearly succeeded. A daring youth, disguised as an officer of gendarmes and provided with forged official papers, reached the place where he was confined and procured his release, but the officer in charge had vague suspicions, and insisted on the two travellers being escorted to the next post-station by a couple of Cossacks. The rescuer tried to get rid of the escort by means of his revolver, but he failed in the attempt, and the fugitives were arrested. In 1883 Tchernishevski was transferred to the milder climate of Astrakhan, and in 1889 he was allowed to return to his native town, Sarátov, where he died a few months afterwards.

seditious proclamations with which they were supposed to sympathise, and a series of destructive fires in St. Petersburg, erroneously attributed to them, frightened timid Liberals and gave the Reactionaries, who had hitherto remained silent, an opportunity of preaching their doctrines with telling effect. The celebrated novelist, Turgeniev, long the idol of the young generation, had inadvertently, in "Fathers and Children," invented the term Nihilist, and it at once came to be applied as an opprobrious epithet, notwithstanding the efforts of Pissarev, a popular writer of remarkable talent, to prove to the public that it ought to be regarded as a term of honour.

Pissarev's defence of Nihilism made no impression outside of his own small circle. According to popular opinion the Nihilists were a band of fanatical young men and women, mostly medical students, who had determined to turn the world upside down and to introduce a new kind of social order, founded on the most advanced principles of social equality and Communism. As a first step towards the great transformation they had reversed the traditional order of things in the matter of *coiffure:* the males allowed their hair to grow long, and the female adepts cut their hair short, adding occasionally the additional badge of blue spectacles. Their unkempt appearance naturally shocked the æsthetic feelings of ordinary people, but to this they were indifferent. They had raised themselves above the level of popular notions, took no account of so-called public opinion, gloried in Bohemianism, despised Philistine respectability, and rather liked to scandalise old-fashioned people imbued with antiquated prejudices.

This was the ridiculous side of the movement, but underneath the absurdities there was something serious. These young men and women, who were themselves terribly in earnest, were systematically hostile, not only to accepted conventionalities in the matter of dress, but to all manner of shams, hypocrisy, and cant in the broad Carlylean sense of those terms. To the "beautiful souls" of the older generation, who had habitually, in conversation and literature, shed pathetic tears over the defects of Russian social and political organisation without ever moving a finger to correct them

—especially the landed proprietors who talked and wrote about civilisation, culture, and justice while living comfortably on the revenues provided for them by their unfortunate serfs—they had the strongest aversion; and this naturally led them to condemn in strong language the worship of æsthetic culture. But here again they fell into exaggeration. Professing extreme utilitarianism, they explained that the humble shoemaker who practises his craft diligently is, in the true sense, a greater man than a Shakespeare or a Goethe, because humanity has more need of shoes than of dramas and poetry.

Such silly paradoxes provoked, of course, merely a smile of compassion; what alarmed the sensible, respectable "Philistine" was the method of cleansing the Augean stable recommended by these enthusiasts. Having discovered in the course of their desultory reading that most of the ills that flesh is heir to proceed directly or indirectly from uncontrolled sexual passion and the lust of gain, they proposed to seal hermetically these two great sources of crime and misery by abolishing the old-fashioned institutions of marriage and private property. When society, they argued, would be so organised that all the healthy instincts of human nature could find complete and untrammelled satisfaction, there would be no motive or inducement for committing crimes or misdemeanours. For thousands of years humanity had been sailing on a wrong tack. The great lawgivers of the world, religious and civil, in their ignorance of physical science and positivist methods, had created institutions, commonly known as law and morality, which were utterly unfitted to human nature, and then the magistrate and the moralist had endeavoured to compel or persuade men and women to conform to them, but their efforts had failed most signally. In vain the police had threatened and punished, and the priests had preached and admonished. Human nature had systematically and obstinately rebelled, and was still rebelling, against the unnatural constraint. It was time, therefore, to try a new system. Instead of continuing, as had been done for thousands of years, to force men and women, as it were, into badly fitting, unelastic clothes which cause intense discomfort and prevent all healthy muscular

action, why not adapt the costume to the anatomy and physiology of the human frame? Then the clothes would no longer be rent, and those who wore them would be contented and happy.

Unfortunately for the progress of humanity, there were serious obstacles in the way of this radical change of system. The absurd, antiquated and pernicious institutions and customs were supported by abstruse metaphysical reasons and enshrined in mystical, romantic sentiment, and in this way they might still be preserved for generations unless the axe were laid to the root of the tree. Now, it was said, is the critical moment. Russia must be made to rise at once from the metaphysical to the positivist stage of intellectual development; metaphysical reasoning and romantic sentiment must be rigorously discarded; and everything must be brought to the touchstone of naked practical utility.

One might naturally suppose that men holding such opinions must be materialists of the grossest type—and, indeed, many of them gloried in the name of materialist and atheist—but such an inference would be erroneous. While denouncing metaphysics, they were themselves metaphysicians in so far as they were constantly juggling with abstract conceptions, and letting themselves be guided in their walk and conversation by a priori deductions; while ridiculing romanticism, they had romantic sentiment enough to make them sacrifice their time, their property, and sometimes even their life, to the attainment of an unrealisable ideal; and while congratulating themselves on having passed from the religious to the positivist stage of intellectual development, they frequently showed themselves animated with the spirit of the early martyrs!

Rarely have the strange inconsistencies of human nature been so strikingly exemplified as in these unpractical, anti-religious fanatics. In dealing with them I might easily, without very great exaggeration, produce a most amusing caricature, but I prefer describing them as they really were. A few years after the period here referred to I knew some of them intimately, and I must say that, without at all sharing or sympathising with their opinions, I could not help respecting them as honourable, upright, quixotic men

and women who had made great sacrifices for their convictions. One of them whom I have specially in view at this moment, suffered patiently for years from the utter shipwreck of his generous illusions, and when he could no longer hope to see the dawn of a brighter day, he ended by committing suicide. Yet that man believed himself to be a realist, a materialist, and a utilitarian of the purest water, and habitually professed a scathing contempt for every form of romantic sentiment! In reality he was personally one of the best and most sympathetic men I have ever known.

To return from this digression. So long as the subversive opinions were veiled in abstract language, they raised misgivings in only a comparatively small circle; but when school-teachers put them into a form suited to the juvenile mind, they were apt to produce startling effects. In a satirical novel of the time a little girl is represented as coming to her mother and saying, "Little mamma! Maria Ivan'na, our new schoolmistress, says there is no God and no Tsar, and that it is wrong to marry!" Whether such incidents actually occurred in real life, as several friends assured me, I am not prepared to say, but certainly people believed that they might occur in their own families, and that was quite sufficient to produce alarm even in the ranks of the Liberals, to say nothing of the rapidly increasing army of the Reactionaries.

To illustrate the general uneasiness produced in St. Petersburg, I may quote here a letter written in October, 1861, by a man who occupied one of the highest positions in the Administration. As he had the reputation of being an ultra-Radical who sympathised overmuch with Young Russia, we may assume that he did not take an exceptionally alarmist view of the situation:—

"You have not been long absent—merely a few months; but if you returned now, you would be astonished by the progress which the Opposition, one might say the Revolutionary Party, has already made. The disorders in the University do not concern merely the students. I see in the affair the beginning of serious dangers for public tranquillity and the existing order of things. Young people, without distinction of costume, uniform and origin, take part in the street demonstrations. Besides the students of the University there

are the students of other institutions, and a mass of people who are students only in name. Among these last are certain gentlemen in long beards and a number of *révolutionnaires* in crinoline, who are of all the most fanatical. Blue collars—the distinguishing mark of the students' uniform—have become the *signe de ralliement.* Almost all the professors and many officers take the part of the students. The newspaper critics openly defend their colleagues. Mikhailov has been convicted of writing, printing and circulating one of the most violent proclamations that ever existed, under the heading, 'To the young generation!' Among the students and the men of letters there is unquestionably an organised conspiracy, which has perhaps leaders outside the literary circle. . . . The police are powerless. They arrest anyone they can lay hands on. About eighty people have been already sent to the fortress and examined, but all this leads to no practical result, because the revolutionary ideas have taken possession of all classes, all ages, all professions, and are publicly expressed in the streets, in the barracks, and in the Ministries. I believe the police itself is carried away by them! What this will lead to, it is difficult to predict. I am very much afraid of some bloody catastrophe. Even if it should not go to such a length immediately, the position of the Government will be extremely difficult. Its authority is shaken, and all are convinced that it is powerless, stupid and incapable. On that point there is the most perfect unanimity among all parties of all colours, even the most opposite. The most desperate 'planter'* agrees in that respect with the most desperate Socialist. Meanwhile, those who have the direction of affairs do almost nothing, and have no definite aim in view. At present the Emperor is not in the capital, and now, more than at any other time, there is complete anarchy in the absence of the master of the house. There is a great deal of bustle and talk; and all blame they know not whom."†

The expected revolution did not take place, but timid people had no difficulty in perceiving signs of its approach. The Press continued to disseminate, under a more or less disguised form, ideas which were considered dangerous. The *Kólokol,* a Russian revolutionary paper published in London by Herzen and strictly prohibited by the Press censure, found its way in large quantities into the country, and, as is recorded in an earlier chapter, was read by thousands, including the higher officials and the Emperor

* An epithet commonly applied, at the time of the Emancipation, to the partisans of serfage and the defenders of the proprietors' rights.

† I found this interesting letter thirty-five years ago among the private papers of Nicholas Milútin, who played a leading part as an official in the reforms of the time.

himself, who found it regularly on his writing-table, laid there by some unknown hand. In St. Petersburg, the arrest of Tchernishevski and the suspension of his magazine, the *Contemporary*, made the writers a little more cautious in their mode of expression, but the spirit of their articles remained unchanged. These energetic, intolerant leaders of public opinion were *novi homines* not personally connected with the social strata in which moderate views and retrograde tendencies had begun to prevail. Mostly sons of priests or of petty officials, they belonged to a recently created literary proletariat, composed of young men with boundless aspirations and meagre material resources, who earned a precarious subsistence by journalism or by giving lessons in private families. Living habitually in a world of theories and unrestrained by practical acquaintance with public life, they were ready, from the purest and most disinterested motives, to destroy ruthlessly the existing order of things in order to realise their crude notions of social regeneration. Their heated imagination showed them in the near future a New Russia, composed of independent federated Communes, without any bureaucracy or any central power—a happy land in which everybody virtuously and automatically fulfilled his public and private duties, and in which the policemen and all other embodiments of material constraint were wholly superfluous.

Governments are not easily converted to Utopian schemes of that idyllic type, and it is not surprising that even a Government with liberal humanitarian aspirations like that of Alexander II. should have become alarmed and should have attempted to stem the current. What is to be regretted is that the repressive measures adopted were a little too Oriental in their character. Scores of young students of both sexes—for the Nihilist army included a strong female contingent—were secretly arrested and confined for months in unwholesome prisons, and many of them were finally exiled, without any regular trial, to distant provinces in European Russia or to Siberia. Their exile, it is true, was not at all so terrible as is commonly supposed, because political exiles are not usually confined in prisons or com-

pelled to labour in the mines, but are obliged merely to reside at a given place under police supervision. Still, such punishment was severe enough for educated young men and women, especially when their lot was cast among a population composed exclusively of peasants and small shopkeepers or of Siberian aborigines, and where there were no means of satisfying the most elementary intellectual wants. For those who had no private resources the punishment was particularly severe, because the Government granted merely a miserable monthly pittance, hardly sufficient to purchase food of the coarsest kind, and there was rarely an opportunity of adding to the meagre official allowance by intellectual or manual labour. In all cases the treatment accorded to the exiles wounded their sense of justice and increased the existing discontent among their friends and acquaintances. Instead of acting as a deterrent, the system produced a feeling of profound indignation against the authorities, and ultimately transformed not a few sentimental dreamers into active conspirators.

At first there was no conspiracy or regularly organised secret society, and nothing of which the criminal law in Western Europe could have taken cognisance. Students met in each other's rooms to discuss prohibited books on political and social science, and occasionally short essays on the subjects discussed were written in a revolutionary spirit by members of the coterie. This was called mutual instruction. Between the various coteries or groups there were private personal relations, not only in the capital, but also in the provinces, so that manuscripts and printed papers could be transmitted from one group to another. From time to time the police captured these academic disquisitions, and made raids on the meetings of students who had come together merely for conversation and discussion; and the fresh arrests caused by these incidents increased the hostility to the Government.

In the letter above quoted it is said that the revolutionary ideas had taken possession of all classes, all ages, and all professions. This may have been true with regard to St. Petersburg, but it could not have been said of the provinces. There the landed proprietors were in a very different frame

of mind. They had to struggle with a multitude of urgent practical affairs which left them little time for idyllic dreaming about an imaginary millennium. Their serfs had been emancipated, and what remained to them of their estates had to be reorganised on the basis of free labour. Into the semi-chaotic state of things created by such far-reaching changes, legal and economic, they did not wish to see any more confusion introduced, and they did not at all feel that they could dispense with the Central Government and the policeman. On the contrary, the Central Government was urgently needed in order to obtain a little ready money wherewith to reorganise the estates in the new conditions, and the police organisation required to be strengthened in order to compel the emancipated serfs to fulfil their legal obligations. These men and their families were, therefore, much more conservative than the class commonly designated "the young generation," and they naturally sympathised with the "Philistines" in St. Petersburg who had been alarmed by the exaggerations of the Nihilists.

Even the landed proprietors, however, were not so entirely free from discontent and troublesome political aspirations as the Government would have desired. They had not forgotten the autocratic and bureaucratic way in which the Emancipation had been prepared, and their indignation had been only partially appeased by their being allowed to carry out the provisions of the law without much bureaucratic interference. So much for their discontent. As for their reform aspirations, they thought that, as a compensation for having consented to the liberation of their serfs and for having been expropriated from about a half of their land, they ought to receive extensive political rights, and be admitted, like the upper classes in Western Europe, to a fair share in the government of the country. Unlike the fiery young Nihilists of St. Petersburg, they did not want to abolish or paralyse the central power; what they wanted was to co-operate with it loyally, and to give their advice on important questions by means of representative institutions. They formed a constitutional group so moderate in its aims that it might have been used as a convenient safety-valve for the explosive forces which were steadily

accumulating under the surface of society, but it never found favour in the official world. When some of its leading members ventured to hint in the Press and in loyal addresses to the Emperor that the Government would do well to consult the country on important questions, their respectful suggestions were coldly received or bluntly rejected by the bureaucracy and the Autocratic Power.

The more the revolutionary and constitutional groups sought to strengthen their position, the more pronounced became the reactionary tendencies in the official world, and these received in 1863 an immense impetus from the Polish insurrection, with which the Nihilists and even some of the Liberals sympathised. The students of the St. Petersburg University, for example, scandalised their more patriotic fellow-countrymen by making a pro-Polish demonstration.

That ill-advised attempt on the part of the Poles to recover their independence had a curious effect on Russian public opinion. Alexander II., with the warm approval of the more Liberal section of the educated classes, was in the course of creating for Poland almost complete administrative autonomy under the viceroyalty of a Russian Grand Duke; and the Emperor's brother Constantine was preparing to carry out the scheme in a generous spirit. Soon it became evident that what the Poles wanted was not administrative autonomy, but political independence, with the frontiers which existed before the first partition! Trusting to the expected assistance of the Western Powers and the secret connivance of Austria, they raised the standard of insurrection, and some trifling successes were magnified by the pro-Polish Press into important victories. As the news of the rising spread over Russia, there was a moment of hesitation. Those who had been for some years habitually extolling liberty and self-government as the normal conditions of progress, who had been sympathising warmly with every Liberal movement, whether at home or abroad, and who had put forward a voluntary federation of independent Communes as the ideal State-organism, could not well frown on the political aspirations of the Polish patriots. The Liberal sentiment of that time was so extremely philosophical

and cosmopolitan that it hardly distinguished between Poles and Russians, and liberty was supposed to be the birthright of every man and woman, to whatever nationality they might happen to belong. But underneath these beautiful artificial clouds of cosmopolitan Liberal sentiment lay the volcano of national patriotism, dormant for the moment, but by no means extinct. Though the Russians are in some respects the most cosmopolitan of European nations, they are at the same time capable of indulging in violent outbursts of patriotic fanaticism; and events in Warsaw brought into hostile contact these two contradictory elements in the national character.

The struggle was only momentary. Ere long the patriotic feelings gained the upper hand and crushed all cosmopolitan sympathy with political freedom. The *Moscow Gazette,* the first of the papers to recover its mental equilibrium, thundered against the pseudo-Liberal sentimentalism which would, if unchecked, necessarily lead to the dismemberment of the Empire; and its editor, Katkov, became for a time the most influential private individual in the country. A few, indeed, remained true to their convictions. Herzen, for instance, wrote in the *Kólokol* a glowing panegyric on two Russian officers who had refused to fire on the insurgents; and here and there a good Orthodox Russian might be found who confessed that he was ashamed of Muraviev's extreme severity in Lithuania. But such men were few, and they were commonly regarded as traitors, especially after the ill-advised diplomatic intervention of the Western Powers. Even Herzen, by his publicly expressed sympathy with the insurgents, lost entirely his popularity and influence among his fellow-countrymen. The great majority of the public thoroughly approved of the severe, energetic measures adopted by the Government, and when the insurrection was suppressed, men who had a few months previously spoken and written in magniloquent terms about humanitarian Liberalism joined in the ovations offered to Muraviev! At a great dinner given in his honour, that ruthless administrator of the old Muscovite type, who had systematically opposed the emancipation of the serfs and had never concealed his contempt for the Liberal ideas in fashion, could

ironically express his satisfaction at seeing around him so many "new friends"! *

This revulsion of public feeling gave the Moscow Slavophils an opportunity of again preaching their doctrine that the safety and prosperity of Russia were to be found, not in the Liberalism and Constitutionalism of Western Europe, but in patriarchal autocracy, Eastern Orthodoxy, and the peculiarities of Russian nationality. Thus the reactionary tendencies gained ground; but Alexander II., while causing all political agitation to be repressed, did not at once abandon his policy of introducing radical reforms by means of the Autocratic Power. On the contrary, he gave orders that the preparatory work for creating local self-government and reorganising the Law Courts should be pushed on energetically. The important laws for the establishment of the Zemstvo and for the great judicial reforms, which I have described in previous chapters, both date from the year 1864.

These and other reforms of a less important kind made no impression on the young irreconcilables. A small group of them, under the leadership of a certain Ishútin, formed in Moscow a small secret society, and conceived the design of assassinating the Emperor, in the hope that his son and successor, who was erroneously supposed to be imbued with ultra-Liberal ideas, might continue the work which his father had begun and had not the courage to complete. In April, 1866, the attempt on the life of the Emperor was made by a youth called Karakózov as his Majesty was leaving a public garden in St. Petersburg, but the bullet happily missed its mark, and the culprit was executed.

This incident formed a turning-point in the policy of the Government. Alexander II. began to fear that he had gone too far, or, at least, too quickly, in his policy of radical reform. An Imperial rescript announced that law, property, and religion were in danger, and that the Government would lean on the Noblesse and other conservative elements of

* In fairness to Count Muraviev I must say that he was not so black as he was painted in the Polish and West-European Press. He left an interesting autobiographical fragment relating to the history of this time, but it is not likely to be printed for some years. As an historical document it is valuable, but must be used with caution by the future historian. A copy of it was for some time in my possession, but I was bound by a promise not to make extracts.

Society. The two periodicals which advocated the most advanced views (*Sovreménnik* and *Rússkoye Slóvo*) were suppressed permanently, and precautions were taken to prevent the annual assemblies of the Zemstvo from giving public expression to the aspirations of the moderate Liberals.

A secret official inquiry showed that the revolutionary agitation proceeded in all cases from young men who were studying, or had recently studied, in the universities, the seminaries, or the technical schools, such as the Medical Academy and the Agricultural Institute. Plainly, therefore, the system of education was at fault. The semi-military system of the time of Nicholas had been supplanted by one in which discipline was reduced to a minimum and the study of natural science formed a prominent element. Here, it was thought, lay the chief root of the evil.

Englishmen may have some difficulty in imagining a possible connection between natural science and revolutionary agitation. To them the two things must seem wide as the poles asunder. Surely mathematics, chemistry, physiology, and similar subjects have nothing to do with politics. When a young Englishman takes to studying any branch of natural science, he gets up his subject by means of lectures, text-books, and museums or laboratories, and when he has mastered it, he probably puts his knowledge to some practical use. In Russia it is otherwise. Few students confine themselves to their speciality. The majority of them dislike the laborious work of mastering dry details, and with the presumption which is often found in conjunction with youth and a smattering of knowledge, they aspire to become social reformers, and imagine themselves specially qualified for such activity.

But what, it may be asked, has social reform to do with natural science? I have already indicated the connection in the Russian mind. Though very few of the students of that time had ever read the voluminous works of Auguste Comte, they were all more or less imbued with the spirit of the Positivist Philosophy, in which all the sciences are subsidiary to sociology, and social reorganisation is the ultimate object of scientific research. The imaginative Positivist can see with prophetic eye Humanity reorganised

on strictly scientific principles. Cool-headed people who have had a little experience of the world, if they ever indulge in such delightful dreams, recognise clearly that this ultimate goal of human intellectual activity, if it is ever to be reached, is still a long way off in the misty distance of the future; but the would-be social reformers among the Russian students of the 'sixties were too young, too inexperienced, and too presumptuously self-confident to recognise this plain, simple truth. They felt that too much valuable time had been already lost, and they were madly impatient to begin the great work without further delay. As soon as they had acquired a smattering of chemistry, physiology, and biology, they imagined themselves capable of reorganising human society from top to bottom, and when they had acquired this conviction they were of course unfitted for the patient, plodding study of details.

To remedy these evils, Count Dimitri Tolstoy, who was regarded as a pillar of Conservatism, was appointed Minister of Public Instruction, with the mission of protecting the young generation against pernicious ideas, and eradicating from the schools, colleges, and universities all revolutionary tendencies. He determined to introduce more discipline into all the educational establishments, and to supplant to a certain extent the superficial study of natural science by the thorough study of the classics—that is to say, Latin and Greek. This scheme, which became known before it was actually put into execution, produced a storm of discontent in the young generation. Discipline at that time was regarded as an antiquated and useless remnant of patriarchal tyranny, and young men who were impatient to take part in social reorganisation resented being treated as naughty schoolboys. To them it seemed that the Latin grammar was an ingenious instrument for stultifying youthful intelligence, destroying intellectual development, and checking political progress. Ingenious speculations about the possible organisation of the working classes and grandiose views of the future of humanity are so much more interesting and agreeable than the rules of Latin syntax and the Greek irregular verbs!

Count Tolstoy could congratulate himself on the efficacy

of his administration, for from the time of his appointment there was a lull in the political excitement. During three or four years there was only one political trial, and that an insignificant one; whereas there had been twenty between 1861 and 1864, and all more or less important. I am not at all sure, however, that the educational reform, which created much momentary irritation and discontent, had anything to do with the improvement in the situation. In any case, there were other and more potent causes at work. The excitement was too intense to be long-lived, and the fashionable theories too fanciful to stand the wear and tear of everyday life. They evaporated, therefore, with amazing rapidity when the leaders of the movement had disappeared —Tchernishevski and others by exile, and Dobrolubov and Pissarev by death—and when among the less prominent representatives of the young generation many succumbed to the sobering influences of time and experience or drifted into lucrative professions. Besides this, the reactionary currents were making themselves felt, especially since the attempt on the life of the Emperor. So long as these had been confined to the official world they had not much affected the literature, except externally through the Press-censure, but when they permeated the reading public their influence was much stronger. Whatever the cause, there is no doubt that, in the last years of the 'sixties, there was a subsidence of excitement and enthusiasm, and the peculiar intellectual phenomenon which had been nicknamed Nihilism was supposed to be a thing of the past. In reality, the movement of which Nihilism was a prominent manifestation had merely lost something of its academic character, and was entering on a new stage of development.

CHAPTER XXXV

SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA, REVOLUTIONARY AGITATION, AND TERRORISM

COUNT TOLSTOY'S educational reform had one effect which was not anticipated: it brought the revolutionists into closer contact with Western Socialism. Many students, finding their position in Russia uncomfortable, determined to go abroad and continue their studies in foreign universities, where they would be free from the inconveniences of police supervision and Press-censure. Those of the female sex had an additional motive to emigrate because they could not complete their studies in Russia, but they had more difficulty in carrying out their intention, because parents naturally disliked the idea of their daughters going abroad to lead a Bohemian life, and they very often obstinately refused to give their consent. In such cases the persistent daughter found herself in a dilemma. Though she might run away from her family and possibly earn her own living, she could not easily cross the frontier without a passport; and without the parental sanction a passport could not be obtained. Of course she might marry and get the consent of her husband, but most of these young ladies objected to the trammels of matrimony. Occasionally the problem was solved by means of a fictitious marriage, and when a young man could not be found to co-operate voluntarily in the arrangement, the terrorist methods which the revolutionists adopted a few years later for other purposes might be employed. I have heard of at least one case in which an ardent female devotee of medical science threatened to shoot a student who was going abroad if he did not submit to the matrimonial ceremony and allow her to accompany him to the frontier as his official wife!

Strange as this story may seem, it contains nothing inherently improbable. At that time the energetic young

ladies of the Nihilist school were not to be diverted from their purposes by trifling obstacles. We shall meet some of them hereafter, displaying great courage and tenacity in revolutionary activity. One of them, as I have already mentioned, attempted to murder the Prefect of St. Petersburg, and another, a young person of considerable refinement and great personal charm, gave the signal for the assassination of Alexander II., and expiated her crime on the scaffold without the least sign of repentance.

Most of the studious *émigrés* of both sexes went to Zürich, where female students were admitted to the medical classes. Here they made the acquaintance of noted Socialists from various countries who had settled in Switzerland, and being in search of panaceas for social regeneration, they naturally fell under their influence. At the same time they read with avidity the works of Proudhon, Lassalle, Büchner, Marx, Flerovski, Pfeiffer and other writers of "advanced" opinions.

Among the apostles of Socialism living at that time in Switzerland, they found a sympathetic fellow-countryman in the famous Anarchist Bakúnin, who had succeeded in escaping from Siberia. His ideal was the immediate overthrow of all existing Governments, the destruction of all administrative organisation, the abolition of all *bourgeois* institutions, and the establishment of an entirely new order of things on the basis of a free federation of productive Communes, in which all the land should be distributed among those capable of tilling it and the instruments of production confided to co-operative associations. Efforts to obtain mere political reforms, even of the most radical type, were regarded by him with contempt as miserable palliatives, which could be of no real, permanent benefit to the masses, and might be positively injurious by prolonging the present era of *bourgeois* domination.

For the dissemination of these principles a special organ called *The Cause of the People* (*Narodnoye Dyelo*) was founded in Geneva in 1868 and was smuggled across the Russian frontier in considerable quantities. It aimed at drawing away the young generation from Academic Nihilism to more practical revolutionary activity, but it evidently remained to some extent under the old influences, for it

indulged occasionally in very abstract philosophical disquisitions. In its first number, for example, it published a programme in which the editors thought it necessary to declare that they were materialists and atheists, because the belief in God and a future life, as well as every other kind of idealism, demoralises the people, inspiring it with mutually contradictory aspirations, and thereby depriving it of the energy necessary for the conquest of its natural rights in this world, and the complete organisation of a free and happy life. At the end of two years this organ for moralising the people [redacted] from want of funds, but other periodicals and pamp[redacted]rinted, and the clandestine relations between the [redacted]tzerland and their friends in St. Petersburg were [redacted] without difficulty, notwithstanding the efforts of the [redacted]ut the connection. In this way Young Russia beca[redacted]nd more saturated with the extreme Socialist theories [redacted]n Western Europe.

Thanks partly to this foreign influence and partly to their own practical experience, the would-be reformers who remained at home came to understand that academic talking and discussing could bring about no serious results. Students alone, however numerous and however devoted to the cause, could not hope to overthrow or coerce the Government. It was childish to suppose that the walls of the autocratic Jericho could be overthrown by the blasts of academic trumpets. Attempts at revolution could not be successful without the active support of the people, and consequently the revolutionary agitation must be extended to the masses.

So far there was complete agreement among the revolutionists, but with regard to the *modus operandi* emphatic differences of opinion appeared. Those who were carried away by the stirring accents of Bakúnin imagined that if the masses could only be made to feel themselves the victims of administrative and economic oppression, they would rise and free themselves by a united effort. According to this view all that was required was that popular discontent should be excited and that precautions should be taken to ensure that the explosions of discontent should take place simul-

taneously all over the country. The rest might safely be left, it was thought, to the operation of natural forces and the inspiration of the moment. Against this dangerous illusion warning voices were raised. Lavróv, for example, while agreeing with Bakúnin that mere political reforms were of little or no value, and that any genuine improvement in the condition of the working classes could proceed only from economic and social reorganisation, maintained stoutly that the revolution, to be permanent and beneficial, must be accomplished, not by demagogues directing the ignorant masses, but by the people as a whole, *after it had been enlightened and instructed as to its true interests.* The preparatory work would necessarily require a whole generation of educational propagandists, living among the labouring population, rural and urban.

For a time there was a conflict between these two currents of opinion, but the views of Lavróv, which were [illegible] a practical development of academic Nihilism, gained more adherents than the violent anarchical proposals of Bakúnin, and finally the grandiose scheme of realising gradually the Socialist ideal by indoctrinating the masses was adopted with enthusiasm. In St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other large towns, the student associations for mutual instruction, to which I have referred in the foregoing chapter, became centres of popular propaganda, and the academic Nihilists were transformed into active missionaries. Scores of male and female students, impatient to convert the masses to the gospel of freedom and terrestrial felicity, sought to get into touch with the common people by settling in the villages as school-teachers, medical practitioners, midwives, etc., or by working as common factory hands in the industrial centres. In order to obtain employment in the factories and conceal their real purpose, they procured false passports, in which they were described as belonging to the lower classes; and even those who settled in the villages lived generally under assumed names. Thus was formed a class of professional revolutionists, sometimes called the Illegals, who were liable to be arrested at any moment by the police. As compensation for the privations and hardships which they had to endure, they had the consolation of believing

that they were advancing the good cause. The means they usually employed for making converts were informal conversations and pamphlets expressly written for the purpose. The more enthusiastic and persevering of these missionaries continued their efforts for months and years, remaining in communication with the headquarters in the capital or some provincial town in order to report progress, obtain a fresh supply of pamphlets, and get their forged passports renewed.

This extraordinary movement was called "going in among the people," and it spread among the young generation like an epidemic. In 1873 it was suddenly reinforced by a detachment of fresh recruits. Over a hundred Russian students were recalled by the Government from Switzerland, in order to save them from the baneful influence of Bakúnin, Lavróv, and other noted Socialists, and a large proportion of them joined the ranks of the propagand[redacted]

With regard to the aims and methods [redacted]-dists, a good deal of information was obtained [redacted] of a judicial inquiry instituted in 1875. A peasan[redacted] was at the same time a factory worker, informed [redacted] police that certain persons were distributing revolutionary pamphlets among the factory hands, and as a proof of what he said he produced some pamphlets which he had himself received. This led to an investigation, which showed that a number of young men and women, evidently belonging to the educated classes, were disseminating revolutionary ideas by means of pamphlets and conversation. Arrests followed, and it was soon discovered that these agitators belonged to a large secret association, which had its centre in Moscow, and local branches in Ivanovo, Tula, and Kief. In Ivanovo, for instance—a manufacturing town about a hundred miles to the north-east of Moscow—the police found a small apartment inhabited by three young men and four young women, all of whom, though belonging by birth to the educated classes, had the appearance of ordinary factory workers, prepared their own food, did with their own hands all the domestic work, and sought to avoid everything which could distinguish them from the labouring population.

* Instances of "going in among the people" had happened as early as 1864, but they did not become frequent till after 1870.

In the apartment were found 240 copies of revolutionary pamphlets, a considerable sum of money, a large amount of correspondence in cipher, and several forged passports.

How many persons the society contained it is impossible to say, because a large proportion of them eluded the vigilance of the police; but many were arrested, and ultimately forty-seven were condemned. Of these, eleven were nobles, seven were sons of parish priests, and the remainder belonged to the lower classes—that is to say, the small officials, burghers, and peasants. The average age of the prisoners was twenty-four, the oldest being thirty-six and the youngest under seventeen! Only five or six were over twenty-five, and none of these were ringleaders. The female element was represented by no less than fifteen young persons, whose ages were on an average under twenty-two. Two of these, to judge by their photographs, were of refined, prepossessing appearance, seemingly little fitted for taking part in assassinations such as the society talked of organising. The character and aims of the society were clearly depicted in the documentary and oral evidence produced at the trial. According to the fundamental principles, there should exist among the members absolute equality, complete mutual responsibility and full frankness and confidence with regard to the affairs of the association. Among the conditions of admission we find that the candidate should devote himself entirely to revolutionary activity; that he should be ready to sever all ties, whether of friendship or of love, for the good cause; that he should possess great powers of self-sacrifice and the capacity for keeping secrets; and that he should consent to become, when necessary, a common labourer in a factory. The desire to maintain absolute equality is well illustrated by the article of the statutes regarding the administration: the office-bearers are not to be chosen by election, but all members are to be office-bearers in turn, and the term of office must not exceed one month!

The avowed aim of the society was to destroy the existing social order, and to replace it by one in which there should be no private property and no distinctions of class or wealth; or, as it is expressed in one document, "to found on the ruins of the present social organisation the Empire of the

working classes." The means to be employed were indicated in a general way, but each member was to adapt himself to circumstances, and was to devote all his energies to forwarding the cause of the revolution. For the guidance of the inexperienced, the following means were recommended: simple conversations, dissemination of pamphlets, the exciting of discontent, the formation of organised groups, the creation of funds and libraries. These, taken together, constitute, in the terminology of revolutionary science, "propaganda," and thereafter comes "agitation." The technical distinction between these two processes is that propaganda has a purely preparatory character, and aims merely at enlightening the masses regarding the true nature of the revolutionary cause, whereas agitation aims at exciting an individual or a group to acts which are considered, in the existing regime, as illegal. In time of peace "pure agitation" was to be carried on by means of organised bands which should frighten the Government and the privileged classes, draw away the attention of the authorities from less overt kinds of revolutionary action, raise the spirit of the people and thereby render it more accessible to revolutionary ideas, obtain pecuniary means for further activity, and liberate political prisoners. In time of insurrection the members should give to popular movements every assistance in their power, and impress on them a Socialistic character. The central administration and the local branches should establish relations with publishers, and take steps to secure a regular supply of prohibited books from abroad. Such are a few characteristic extracts from a document which might fairly be called a treatise on revolutionology.

As a specimen of the revolutionary pamphlets circulated by the propagandists and agitators I may give here a brief account of one which is well known to the political police. It is entitled *Khítraya Mekhánika* (Cunning Machinery), and gives a graphic picture of the ideas and methods employed. The *mise en scène* is extremely simple. Two peasants, Stepán and Andréi, are represented as meeting in a gin-shop and drinking together. Stepán is described as good and kindly when he has to do with men of his own class, but very sharp-tongued when speaking with a foreman of

manager. Always ready with an answer, he can on occasion silence even an official! He has travelled all over the Empire, has associated with all sorts and conditions of men, sees everything most clearly, and is, in short, a very remarkable man. One of his excellent qualities is that, being "enlightened" himself, he is always ready to enlighten others, and he now finds an opportunity of displaying his powers.

When Andréi, who is still unenlightened, proposes that they should drink another glass of vodka, he replies that the Tsar, together with the nobles and traders, bars the way to his throat. As his companion does not understand this metaphorical language, he explains that if there were no Tsars, nobles, or traders, he could get five glasses of vodka for the sum that he now pays for one glass. This naturally suggests wider topics, and Stepán gives something like a lecture. The common people, he explains, pay by far the greater part of the taxation, and at the same time do all the work; they plough the fields, build the houses and churches, work in the mills and factories, and in return they are systematically robbed and beaten. And what is done with all the money that is taken from them? First of all, the Tsar gets nine millions of roubles—enough to feed half a province—and with that sum he amuses himself, has hunting-parties, feasts, eats, drinks, makes merry, and lives in stone houses. He gave liberty, it is true, to the peasants; but we know what the Emancipation really was. The best land was taken away and the taxes were increased, lest the muzhik should get fat and lazy. The Tsar is himself the richest landed proprietor and manufacturer in the country. He not only robs us as much as he pleases, but he has sold into slavery (by forming a national debt) our children and grandchildren. He takes our sons as soldiers, shuts them up in barracks so that they should not see their brother peasants, and hardens their hearts so that they become wild beasts, ready to rend their parents. The nobles and traders likewise rob the poor peasants. In short, all the upper classes have invented a bit of cunning machinery by which the muzhik is made to pay for their pleasures and luxuries.

The people, however, will one day rise and break this

machinery to pieces. When that day comes they must break every part of it, for if one bit escapes destruction, all the other parts of it will immediately grow up again. All the force is on the side of the peasants, if they only knew how to use it. Knowledge will come in time. They will then destroy this machine, and perceive that the only real remedy for all social evils is brotherhood. People should live like brothers, having no *mine* and *thine*, but all things in common. When we have created brotherhood, there will be no riches and no thieves, but right and righteousness without end. In conclusion, Stepán addresses a word to "the torturers": "When the people rise, the Tsar will send troops against us, and the nobles and capitalists will stake their last rouble on the result. If they do not succeed, they must not expect any quarter from us. They may conquer us once or twice, but we shall at last get our own, for there is no power that can withstand the whole people. Then we shall cleanse the country of our persecutors, and establish a brotherhood in which there will be no *mine* and *thine*, but all will work for the common weal. We shall construct no cunning machinery, but shall pluck up evil by the roots, and establish eternal justice!"

The above-mentioned distinction between Propaganda and Agitation, which plays a considerable part in revolutionary literature, had at that time more theoretical than practical importance. The great majority of those who took an active part in the movement confined their efforts to indoctrinating the masses with Socialistic and subversive ideas, and sometimes their methods were rather childish. As an illustration I may cite an amusing incident related by one of the boldest and most tenacious of the revolutionists, who subsequently acquired a certain sense of humour. He and a friend were walking one day on a country road, when they were overtaken by a peasant in his cart. Ever anxious to sow the good seed, they at once entered into conversation with the rustic, telling him that he ought not to pay his taxes, because the *tchinóvniks* robbed the people, and trying to convince him by quotations from Scripture that he ought to resist the authorities. The prudent muzhik whipped up his horse and tried to get out of hearing, but the two zealots

ran after him and continued the sermon till they were completely out of breath. Other propagandists were more practical, and preached a species of agrarian Socialism which the rural population could understand. At the time of the Emancipation, the peasants were convinced, as I have mentioned in a previous chapter, that the Tsar meant to give them all the land, and to compensate the landed proprietors by salaries. Even when the law was read and explained to them, they clung obstinately to their old convictions, and confidently expected that the *real* emancipation would be proclaimed shortly. Taking advantage of this state of things, the propagandists to whom I refer confirmed the peasants in their error, and sought in this way to sow discontent against the proprietors and the Government. Their watchword was "Land and Liberty," and they formed for a good many years a distinct group, under that title (*Zemlya i Volya*, or more briefly *Zemlevoltsi*).

In the St. Petersburg group, which aspired to direct and control this movement, there were one or two men who held different views as to the real object of propaganda and agitation. One of these, Prince Krapotkin, has told the world what his object was at that time. He hoped that the Government would be frightened and that the Autocratic Power, as in France on the eve of the Revolution, would seek support in the landed proprietors, and call together a National Assembly. Thus a constitution would be granted, and though the first Assembly might be conservative in spirit, autocracy would be compelled in the long run to yield to parliamentary pressure.

No such elaborate projects were entertained, I believe, by the majority of the propagandists. Their reasoning was much simpler: "The Government, having become reactionary, tries to prevent us from enlightening the people; we will do it in spite of the Government!" The dangers to which they exposed themselves only confirmed them in their resolution. Though they honestly believed themselves to be realists and materialists, they were at heart romantic idealists, panting to do something heroic. They had been taught by the apostles whom they venerated, from Belinski downwards, that the man who simply talks about the good

of the people, and does nothing to promote it, is among the most contemptible of human beings. No such reproach must be addressed to them. If the Government opposed and threatened, that was no excuse for inactivity. They must be up and doing. "Forward! forward! Let us plunge into the people, identify ourselves with them, and work for their benefit! Suffering is in store for us, but we must endure it with fortitude!" The type which Tchernishevski had depicted in his famous novel, under the name of Rakhmétov —the youth who led an ascetic life and subjected himself to privation and suffering as a preparation for future revolutionary activity—now appeared in the flesh. If we may credit Bakúnin, these Rakhmétovs had not even the consolation of believing in the possibility of a revolution, but as they could not and would not remain passive spectators of the misfortunes of the people, they resolved to go in among the masses, in order to share with them fraternally their sufferings, and at the same time to teach and prepare, not theoretically, but practically, by their living example.* This is, I believe, an exaggeration. The propagandists were, for the most part, of incredibly sanguine temperament.

The success of the propaganda and agitation was not at all in proportion to the numbers and enthusiasm of those who took part in it. Most of these displayed more zeal than mother-wit and discretion. Their Socialism was too abstract and scientific to be understood by rustics, and when they succeeded in making themselves intelligible they awakened in their hearers more suspicion than sympathy. The muzhik is a very matter-of-fact practical person, totally incapable of understanding what Americans call "highfiluting" tendencies in speech and conduct, and as he listened to the preaching of the new gospel, doubts and questionings spontaneously rose in his mind: "What do those young people, who betray their gentle-folk origin by their delicate white hands, their foreign phrases, their ignorance of the common things of everyday peasant life, really want? Why are they bearing hardships and taking so much trouble? They tell us it is for our good, but we are not such fools

* Bakúnin: Gosudarstvennost' i Anarkhiya (State-organisation and Anarchy). Zürich, 1873.

and simpletons as they take us for. They are not doing it all for nothing. What do they expect from us in return? Whatever it is, they are evidently evildoers, and perhaps *moshenniki* (swindlers). Devil take them!" And thereupon the cautious muzhik turns his back upon his disinterested, self-sacrificing teachers, or goes quietly and denounces them to the police! It is not only in the pages of Cervantes that we encounter Don Quixotes and Sancho Panzas!

Occasionally a worse fate befell the missionaries. If they allowed themselves, as they sometimes did, to "blaspheme" against religion or the Tsar, they ran the risk of being maltreated on the spot. I have heard of one case in which the punishment for blasphemy was applied by sturdy peasant matrons. Even when the propagandists escaped such mishaps they had not much reason to congratulate themselves on their success. After three years of arduous labour the hundreds of apostles could not boast of more than a score or two of converts among the genuine working classes, and even these few did not all remain faithful unto death. Some of them, however, it must be admitted, laboured and suffered to the end with the courage and endurance of true martyrs.

It was not merely the indifference or hostility of the masses that the propagandists had to complain of. The police soon got on their track, and did not confine themselves to persuasion and logical arguments. Towards the end of 1873 they arrested some members of the central directing group in St. Petersburg, and in the following May they discovered in the province of Sarátov an affiliated organisation with which nearly 800 persons were connected, about one-fifth of them belonging to the female sex. A few came of well-to-do families—sons and daughters of minor officials or small landed proprietors—but the great majority were poor students of humbler origin, a large contingent being supplied by the sons of the poor parish clergy. In other provinces the authorities made similar discoveries. Before the end of the year a large proportion of the propagandists were in prison, and the centralised organisation, so far as such a thing existed, was destroyed. Gradually it dawned on the minds even of the Don Quixotes that pacific propa-

ganda was no longer possible, and that attempts to continue it could lead only to useless sacrifices.

For a time there was universal discouragement in the revolutionary ranks; and among those who had escaped arrest there were mutual recriminations and endless discussions about the causes of failure and the changes to be made in modes of action. The practical result of these recriminations and discussions was that the partisans of a slow, pacific propaganda retired to the background, and the more impatient revolutionary agitators took possession of the movement. These maintained stoutly that, as pacific propaganda had become impossible, stronger methods must be adopted. The masses must be organised so as to offer successful resistance to the Government. Conspiracies must, therefore, be formed, local disorders provoked, and blood made to flow. The part of the country which seemed best adapted for experiments of this kind was the southern and south-eastern region, inhabited by the descendants of the turbulent Cossack population which had raised formidable insurrections under Stenka Razin and Pugatchév in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here, then, the more impatient agitators began their work. A Kief group called the *Buntari* (rioters), composed of about twenty-five individuals, settled in various localities as small shopkeepers or horse-dealers, or wandered about as workmen or pedlars.

One member of the group has given us in his Reminiscences an amusing account of the experiment. Everywhere the agitators found the peasants suspicious and inhospitable, and consequently they had to suffer a great deal of discomfort. Some of them at once gave up the task as hopeless. The others settled in a village and began operations. Having made a topographical survey of the locality, they worked out an ingenious plan of campaign; but they had no recruits for the future army of insurrection, and if they had been able to get recruits, they had no arms for them, and no money wherewith to purchase arms or anything else. In these circumstances they gravely appointed a committee to collect funds, knowing very well that no money would be forthcoming. It was as if a shipwrecked crew in an open boat,

having reached the brink of starvation, appointed a committee to obtain a supply of fresh water and provisions! In the hope of obtaining assistance from headquarters a delegate was sent to St. Petersburg and Moscow to explain that for the arming of the population about a quarter of a million of roubles was required. The delegate brought back thirty second-hand revolvers! The Revolutionist who confesses all this * recognises that the whole scheme was childishly unpractical: "We chose the path of popular insurrection because we had faith in the revolutionary spirit of the masses, in its power and its invincibility. That was the weak side of our position; and the most curious part of it was that we drew proofs in support of our theory from history—from the *abortive* insurrections of Razin and Pugatchév, which took place in an age when the Government had only a small regular army and no railways or telegraphs! We did not even think of attempting a propaganda among the military!"

In the district of Tchigirin the agitators had a little momentary success, but the result was the same. There a student called Stefánovitch pretended that the Tsar was struggling with the officials to benefit the peasantry, and he showed the simple rustics a forged imperial manifesto in which they were ordered to form a society for the purpose of raising an insurrection against the officials, the nobles, and the priests. At one moment (April, 1877) the society had about 600 members, but a few months later it was discovered by the police, and the leaders and peasants were arrested.

When it had thus become evident that propaganda and agitation were alike useless, and when numerous arrests were being made daily, it became necessary for the Revolutionists to reconsider their position, and some of the more moderate proposed to rally to the Liberals, as a temporary measure. Hitherto there had been very little sympathy and a good deal of openly avowed hostility between Liberals and Revolutionists. The latter, convinced that they could overthrow the Autocratic Power by their own unaided efforts, had looked askance at Liberalism because they believed that parlia-

* Debogorio-Mokriévitch: Vospominaniya (Reminiscences). Paris, 1894-99.

mentary discussions and party struggles would impede rather than facilitate the advent of the Socialist millennium, and strengthen the domination of the *bourgeoisie* without really improving the condition of the masses. Now, however, when the need of allies was felt, it seemed that constitutional government might be used as a stepping-stone for reaching the Socialist ideal, because it must grant a certain liberty of the Press and of association, and it would necessarily abolish the existing autocratic system of arresting, imprisoning and exiling, on mere suspicion, without any regular form of legal procedure. As usual, an appeal was made to history, and arguments were easily found in favour of this course of action. The past of other nations had shown that in the march of progress there are no sudden leaps and bounds, and it was therefore absurd to imagine, as the Revolutionists had hitherto done, that Russian Autocracy could be swallowed by Socialism at a gulp. There must always be periods of transition, and it seemed that such a transition period might now be initiated. Liberalism might be allowed to destroy, or at least weaken, Autocracy, and then it might be destroyed in its turn by Socialism of the most advanced type.

Having adopted this theory of gradual historic development, some of the more practical Revolutionists approached the more advanced Liberals and urged them to more energetic action; but before anything could be arranged, the more impatient Revolutionists—notably the group called the *Narodovoltsi* (National-will-ists) — intervened, denounced what they considered an unholy alliance, and proposed a policy of terrorism by which the Government might be frightened into a more conciliatory attitude. Their idea was that the officials who displayed most zeal against the revolutionary movement should be assassinated, and that every act of severity on the part of the Administration should be answered by an act of "revolutionary justice."

As it was evident that the choice between these two courses of action must determine in great measure the future character and ultimate fate of the movement, there was much discussion between the two groups; but the question did not long remain in suspense. Soon the extreme party gained

the upper hand, and the Terrorist policy was adopted. I shall let the Revolutionists themselves explain this momentous decision. In a long proclamation published some years later it is explained thus:—

"The revolutionary movement in Russia began with the so-called 'going in among the people.' The first Russian Revolutionists thought that the freedom of the people could be obtained only by the people itself, and they imagined that the only thing necessary was that the people should absorb Socialistic ideas. To this it was supposed that the peasantry were naturally inclined, because they already possessed, in the Rural Commune, institutions which contained the seeds of Socialism, and which might serve as a basis for the reconstruction of society according to Socialist principles. The propagandists hoped, therefore, that in the teachings of West-European Socialism the people would recognise its own instinctive creations in riper and more clearly defined forms, and that it would joyfully accept the new teaching.

"But the people did not understand its friends, and showed itself hostile to them. It turned out that institutions born in slavery could not serve as a foundation for the new construction, and that the man who was yesterday a serf, though capable of taking part in disturbances, was not fitted for conscious revolutionary work. With pain in their hearts the Revolutionists had to confess that they were deceived in their hopes of the people. Around them were no social revolutionary forces on which they could lean for support, and yet they could not reconcile themselves with the existing state of violence and slavery. Thereupon awakened a last hope—the hope of a drowning man who clutches at a straw: a little group of heroic and self-sacrificing individuals might accomplish with their own strength the difficult task of freeing Russia from the yoke of autocracy. They had to do it themselves, because there was no other means. But would they be able to accomplish it? For them that question did not exist. The struggle of that little group against autocracy was like the heroic means on which a doctor decides when there is no longer any hope of the patient's recovery. Terrorism was the only means that remained, and it had the advantage of giving a natural vent to pent-up feelings, and of seeming a reaction against the cruel persecutions of the Government. The party called the *Narodnaya Volya* (National Will) was accordingly formed, and during several years the world witnessed a spectacle that had never been seen before in history. The *Narodnaya Volya*, insignificant in numbers but strong in spirit, engaged in single combat the powerful Russian Government. Neither executions, nor imprisonment with hard labour, nor ordinary imprisonment and exile, could destroy the energy of these Revolutionists. Under their shots fell, one after the other,

the most zealous and typical representatives of arbitrary action and violence. . . ."

It was at this time, in 1877, when propaganda and agitation among the masses were being abandoned for the system of terrorism, but before any assassinations had taken place, that I accidentally came into personal relations with some prominent adherents of the revolutionary movement. One day a young man of sympathetic appearance, whom I did not know and who brought no credentials, called on me in St. Petersburg and suggested to me that I might make public through the English Press what he described as a revolting act of tyranny and cruelty committed by General Trepov, the Prefect of the city. That official, he said, in visiting recently one of the prisons, had noticed that a young political prisoner called Bogolúbov did not salute him as he passed, and he had ordered him to be flogged in consequence. To this I replied that I had no reason to disbelieve the story, but that I had equally no reason to accept it as accurate, as it rested solely on the evidence of a person with whom I was totally unacquainted. My informant took the objection in good part, and offered me the names and addresses of a number of persons who could supply me with any proofs that I might desire.

At his next visit I told him I had seen several of the persons he had named, and that I could not help perceiving that they were closely connected with the revolutionary movement. I then went on to suggest that as the sympathisers with that movement constantly complained that they were systematically misrepresented, calumniated and caricatured, the leaders ought to give to the world an accurate account of their real doctrines, and in this respect I should be glad to assist them. Already I knew something of the subject, because I had many friends and acquaintances among the sympathisers, and had often had with them interminable discussions. With their ideas, so far as I knew them, I felt bound to confess that I had no manner of sympathy, but I flattered myself, and he himself had admitted, that I was capable of describing accurately and criticising impartially doctrines with which I did not agree. My new acquaintance, whom I may call Dimitri Ivan'itch, was pleased with the

proposal, and after he had consulted with some of his friends, we came to an agreement by which I should receive all the materials necessary for writing an accurate account of the doctrinal side of the movement. With regard to any conspiracies that might be in progress, I warned him that he must be strictly reticent, because if I came accidentally to know of any terrorist designs I should consider it my duty to warn the authorities. For this reason I declined to attend any secret conclaves, and it was agreed that I should be instructed without being initiated.

The first step in my instruction was not very satisfactory or encouraging. One day Dimitri Ivan'itch brought me a large manuscript, which contained, he said, the real doctrines of the Revolutionists and the explanation of their methods. I was surprised to find that it was written in English, and I perceived at a glance that it was not at all what I wanted. As soon as I had read the first sentence I turned to my friend and said:

"I am very sorry to find, Dimitri Ivan'itch, that you have not kept your part of the bargain. We agreed, you may remember, that we were to act towards each other in absolutely good faith, and here I find a flagrant bit of bad faith in the very first sentence of the manuscript which you have brought me. The document opens with the statement that a large number of students have been arrested and imprisoned for distributing books among the people. That statement may be true according to the letter, but it is evidently intended to mislead. These youths have been arrested, as you must know, not for distributing ordinary books, as the memorandum suggests, but for distributing books *of a certain kind*. I have read some of them, and I cannot feel at all surprised that the Government should object to their being put into the hands of the ignorant masses. Take, for example, the one entitled *Khitraya Mekhánika*, and others of the same type. The practical teaching they contain is that the peasants should be ready to rise and cut the throats of the landed proprietors and officials. Now, a wholesale massacre of the kind may or may not be desirable in the interests of society, and justifiable according to some new code of higher morality. That

is a question into which I do not enter. All I maintain is that the writer of this memorandum, in speaking of 'books,' meant to mislead me."

Dimitri Ivan'itch looked puzzled and ashamed. "Forgive me," he said; "I am to blame—not for having attempted to deceive you, but for not having taken precautions. I have not read the manuscript, and I could not if I wished, for it is written in English, and I know no language but my mother-tongue. My friends ought not to have done this. Give me back the paper, and I shall take care that nothing of the sort occurs in future."

This promise was faithfully kept, and I had no further reason to complain. Dimitri Ivan'itch gave me a considerable amount of information, and lent me a valuable collection of revolutionary pamphlets. Unfortunately the course of tuition was suddenly interrupted by unforeseen circumstances, which I may mention as characteristic of life in St. Petersburg at the time. My servant, an excellent young Russian, more honest than intelligent, came to me one morning with a mysterious air, and warned me to be on my guard, because there were "bad people" going about. On being pressed a little, he explained to me what he meant. Two strangers had come to him, and after offering him a few roubles had asked him a number of questions about my habits—at what hour I went out and came home, what persons called on me, and much more of the same sort. "They even tried, sir, to get into your sitting-room; but of course I did not allow them. I believe they want to rob you!"

It was not difficult to guess who these "bad people" were, who took such a keen interest in my doings, and who wanted to examine my apartment in my absence. Any doubts I had on the subject were soon removed. On the morrow and following days I noticed that whenever I went out, and wherever I might walk or drive, I was closely followed by two unsympathetic-looking individuals—so closely that when I turned round sharp they ran into me. The first and second times this little incident occurred they received a strong volley of unceremonious vernacular; but when we became better acquainted we simply smiled at each

other knowingly, as the old Roman augurs are supposed to have done when they met in public unobserved. There was no longer any attempt at concealment or mystification. I knew I was being shadowed, and the shadowers could not help perceiving that I knew it. Yet, strange to say, they were never changed!

The reader probably assumes that the secret police had somehow got wind of my relations with the Revolutionists. Such an assumption presupposes on the part of the police an amount of intelligence and perspicacity which they do not usually possess. On this occasion they were on an entirely wrong scent, and the very day when I first noticed my shadowers a high official, who seemed to regard the whole thing as a good joke, told me confidentially what the wrong scent was. At the instigation of an ex-ambassador, from whom I had the misfortune to differ in matters of foreign policy, the *Moscow Gazette* had denounced me publicly by name as a person who was in the habit of visiting daily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—doubtless with the nefarious purpose of obtaining by illegal means secret political information—and the police had concluded that I was a fit and proper person to be closely watched. In reality, my relations with the Russian Foreign Office, though inconvenient to the ex-ambassador, were perfectly regular and above-board—sanctioned, in fact, by Prince Gortchakov—but the indelicate attentions of the secret police were none the less extremely unwelcome, because some intelligent police-agent might get on to the real scent, and cause me serious inconvenience. I determined, therefore, to break off all relations with Dimitri Ivan'itch and his friends, and postpone my studies to a more convenient season; but that decision did not entirely extricate me from my difficulties. The collection of revolutionary pamphlets was still in my possession, and I had promised to return it. For some little time I did not see how I could keep my promise without compromising myself or others, but at last—after having had my shadowers carefully shadowed in order to learn accurately their habits, and having taken certain elaborate precautions, with which I need not trouble the reader, as he is not likely ever to require them—I paid a visit secretly to Dimitri

Ivan'itch in his small room, almost destitute of furniture, handed him the big parcel of pamphlets, warned him not to visit me again, and bade him farewell.

Thereupon we went our separate ways, and I saw him no more. Whether he subsequently played a leading part in the movement I never could ascertain, because I did not know his real name; but if the conception which I formed of his character was at all accurate, he probably ended his career in Siberia, for he was not a man to look back after having put his hand to the plough. That is a peculiar trait of the Russian Revolutionists of the period in question. Their passion for realising an impossible ideal was incurable. Many of them were again and again arrested; and as soon as they escaped, or were liberated, they almost invariably went back to their revolutionary activity, and worked energetically until they again fell into the clutches of the police.

From this digression into the sphere of personal reminiscences I return now, and take up again the thread of the narrative.

We have seen how the propaganda and the agitation had failed, partly because the masses showed themselves indifferent or hostile, and partly because the Government adopted vigorous repressive measures. We have seen, too, how the leaders found themselves in face of a formidable dilemma; either they must abandon their schemes or they must attack their persecutors. The more energetic among them, as I have already stated, chose the latter alternative, and they proceeded at once to carry out their policy. In the course of a single year (February, 1878, to February, 1879) a whole series of terrorist crimes were committed; in Kiev, an attempt was made on the life of the Public Prosecutor, and an officer of gendarmerie was stabbed; in St. Petersburg the Chief of the Political Police of the Empire (General Mezentsev) was assassinated in broad daylight in one of the central streets, and a similar attempt was made on his successor (General Drenteln); at Kharkov the Governor (Prince Krapotkin) was shot dead when entering his residence. During the same period two members of the revolutionary organisation, accused of treachery, were

"executed" by order of local Committees. In most cases the perpetrators of the crimes contrived to escape. One of them became well known in Western Europe as an author under the pseudonym of Stepniak.

Terrorism had not the desired effect. On the contrary, it stimulated the zeal and activity of the authorities, and in the course of the winter of 1878-9 hundreds of arrests—some say as many as 2,000—were made in St. Petersburg alone. Driven to desperation, the Revolutionists still at large decided that it was useless to assassinate mere officials; the *fons et origo mali* must be reached; a blow must be struck at the Tsar himself! The first attempt was made by a young man called Solovyév, who fired several shots at Alexander II. as he was walking near the Winter Palace, but none of them took effect.

This policy of aggressive terrorism did not meet with universal approval among the Revolutionists, and it was determined to discuss the matter at a Congress of delegates from various local circles. The meetings were held in June, 1879, two months after Solovyév's unsuccessful attempt, at two provincial towns, Lipetsk and Vorónezh. It was there agreed in principle to confirm the decision of the terrorist *Narodovoltsi*. As the Liberals were not in a position to create liberal institutions or to give guarantees for political rights, which were the essential condition of any Socialist agitation, there remained for the revolutionary party no other course than to destroy the despotic autocracy. Thereupon a programme of action was prepared, and an Executive Committee elected. From that moment, though there were still many who preferred milder methods, the Terrorists had the upper hand, and they at once proceeded to centralise the organisation and to introduce stricter discipline, with greater precautions to ensure secrecy.

The Executive Committee imagined that autocracy might be destroyed by assassinating the Tsar, and several carefully planned attempts were made. The first plan was to wreck the Emperor's special train when the Imperial family were returning to St. Petersburg from the Crimea. Mines were accordingly laid at three separate points, but they all failed. At the last of the three points (near Moscow) a train was

blown up, but it was not the one in which the Imperial family was travelling.

Not at all discouraged by this failure, nor by the discovery of its secret printing-press by the police, the Executive Committee next tried to attain its object by an explosion of dynamite in the Winter Palace at the hour when the Imperial family usually assembled at dinner. The execution was entrusted to a certain Halturin, one of the few Revolutionists of peasant origin. As an exceptionally clever carpenter and polisher he easily found regular employment in the palace, and he contrived to make a rough plan of the building. This plan, on which the dining hall was marked with an ominous red cross, fell into the hands of the police, and they made what they considered a careful investigation, but they failed to unravel the plot and did not discover the dynamite, concealed in the carpenters' sleeping quarters. Halturin showed wonderful coolness while the search was going on, and continued to sleep every night on the explosive, though it caused him excruciating headaches. When he was assured by the chemist of the Executive Committee that the quantity collected was sufficient, he exploded the mine at the usual dinner-hour, and contrived to escape uninjured.* In the guard-room immediately above the spot where the dynamite was exploded ten soldiers were killed and fifty-three wounded, and in the dining-hall the floor was wrecked, but the Imperial family escaped in consequence of not sitting down to dinner at the usual hour.

For this barbarous act the Executive Committee publicly accepted full responsibility. In a proclamation placarded in the streets of St. Petersburg it declared that, while regretting the death of the soldiers, it was resolved to carry on the struggle with the Autocratic Power until the social reforms should be entrusted to a Constituent Assembly, composed of members freely elected and furnished with instructions from their constituents.

Finding police-repression so ineffectual, Alexander II. determined to try the effect of conciliation, and for this

* After living some time in Rumania he returned to Russia under the name of Stepánov, and in 1882 he was tried and executed for complicity in the assassination of General Strelnikov.

purpose he placed General Loris Mélikov at the head of the Government, with semi-dictatorial powers (February, 1880). The experiment did not succeed. By the Terrorists it was regarded as "a hypocritical Liberalism outwardly and a veiled brutality within," while in the official world it was condemned as an act of culpable weakness on the part of the autocracy. One consequence of it was that the Executive Committee was encouraged to continue its efforts, and, as the authorities became less vigilant, it was enabled to improve the revolutionary organisation. In a circular sent to the affiliated provincial associations it explained that the only source of legislation must be the national will,* and as the Government would never accept such a principle, its hand must be forced by a great popular insurrection, for which all available forces should be organised. The peasantry, as experience had shown, could not yet be relied on, but efforts should be made to enrol the workmen of the towns. Great importance was now attached to propaganda in the army; but as few conversions had been made among the rank and file, attention was to be directed chiefly to the officers, who would be able to carry their subordinates with them at the critical moment.

While thus recommending the scheme of destroying autocracy by means of a popular insurrection in the distant future, the Committee had not abandoned more expeditious methods, and it was at that moment hatching a plot for the assassination of the Tsar. During the winter months his Majesty was in the habit of holding on Sundays a small parade in the riding-school near the Michael Square in St. Petersburg. On Sunday, March 3rd, 1881, the streets by which he usually returned to the Palace had been undermined at two places, and on an alternative route several conspirators were posted with hand-grenades concealed under their great-coats. The Emperor chose the alternative route. Here, at a signal given by Sophia Perovski, the first grenade was thrown by a student called Ryssakóv, but it merely wounded some members of the escort. The Emperor stopped and got out of his sledge, and as he was making inquiries about the

* Hence the designation *Narodovoltsi* (which, as we have seen, means literally National-will-ists), adopted by this section of the revolutionaries.

wounded soldiers, a second grenade was thrown by a youth called Grinevitski, with fatal effect. Alexander II. was conveyed hurriedly to the Winter Palace, and died almost immediately.

By this act the members of the Executive Committee proved their energy and their talent as conspirators, but they at the same time showed their short-sightedness and their political incapacity; for they had made no preparations for immediately seizing the power which they so ardently coveted—with the intention of using it, of course, entirely for the public good. If the facts were not so well authenticated, we might dismiss the whole story as incredible. A group of young people, certainly not more than thirty or forty in number, without any organised material force behind them, without any influential accomplices in the army or the official world, without any prospect of support from the masses, and with no plan for immediate action after the assassination, deliberately provoked the crisis for which they were so hopelessly unprepared. It has been suggested that they expected the Liberals to seize the supreme power, but this explanation is evidently an afterthought, because they knew that the Liberals were as unprepared as themselves, and they regarded them at that time as dangerous rivals. Besides this, the explanation is quite irreconcilable with the proclamation issued by the Executive Committee immediately afterwards. The most charitable way of explaining the conduct of the conspirators is to suppose that they were actuated more by blind hatred of the autocracy and its agents than by political calculations of a practical kind—that they acted simply like a wounded bull in the arena, which shuts its eyes and recklessly charges its tormentors.

The murder of the Emperor had not at all the effect which the *Narodovoltsi* anticipated. On the contrary, it destroyed their hopes of success. Many people of liberal convictions who sympathised vaguely with the revolutionary movement without taking part in it, and who did not condemn very severely the attacks on police officials, were horrified when they found that the would-be reformers did not spare even the sacred person of the Tsar! At the same time, the police officials, who had become lax and inefficient under the

conciliatory regime of Loris Mélikov, recovered their old zeal, and displayed such inordinate activity that the revolutionary organisation was paralysed and in great measure destroyed. Six of the regicides were condemned to death, and five of them publicly executed, amongst the latter Sophia Perovski, one of the most active and personally sympathetic personages among the Revolutionists. Scores of those who had taken an active part in the movement were in prison or in exile. For a short time the propaganda was continued among military and naval officers, and various attempts at reorganisation, especially in the southern provinces, were made, but they all failed. A certain Degaiev, who had taken part in the formation of military circles, turned informer, and aided the police. By his defection a considerable number of officers, and also Vera Filipov, a young person of remarkable ability and courage, who was the leading spirit in the attempts at reorganisation, were arrested. From time to time the leaders living abroad sent emissaries to revive the propaganda, but these efforts were all fruitless.

One of the active members of the revolutionary party, Leo Deutsch, who has since published his Memoirs, relates how the tide of revolution ebbed rapidly at this time. "Both in Russia and abroad," he says, "I had seen how the earlier enthusiasm had given way to scepticism; men had lost faith, though many of them would not allow that it was so. It was clear to me that a reaction had set in for many years." Of the attempts to resuscitate the movement he says: "The untried and unskilfully managed societies were run to earth before they could undertake anything definite, and the unity and interdependence which characterised the original band of members had disappeared." With regard to the want of unity, another prominent revolutionist (Máslov) wrote to a friend (Dragománov) at Geneva in 1882 in terms of bitter complaint. He accused the Executive Committee of trying to play the part of chief of the whole revolutionary party, and declared that its centralising tendencies were more despotic than those of the Government. Distributing orders among its adherents without initiating them into its plans, it insisted on unquestioning obedience. The Socialist youth, ardent adherents of Federalism, were indignant at this treat-

ment, and began to understand that the Committee used them simply as *chair à canon*. The writer described in vivid colours the mutual hostility which reigned among various fractions of the party, and which manifested itself in accusations and even in denunciations; and he predicted that the *Narodnaya Volya,* which had organised the various acts of terrorism, culminating in the assassination of the Emperor, would never develop into a powerful revolutionary party. It had sunk into the slough of untruth, and it could only continue to deceive the Government and the public.

In the mutual recriminations several interesting admissions were made. It was recognised that neither the educated classes nor the common people were capable of bringing about a revolution: the former were not numerous enough, and the latter were devoted to the Tsar and did not sympathise with the revolutionary movement, though they might perhaps be induced to rise at a moment of crisis. It was considered doubtful whether such a rising was desirable, because the masses, being insufficiently prepared, might turn against the educated minority. In no case could a popular insurrection attain the object which the Socialists had in view, because the power would either remain in the hands of the Tsar—thanks to the devotion of the common people—or it would fall into the hands of the Liberals, who would oppress the masses worse than the autocratic Government had done. Further, it was recognised that acts of terrorism were worse than useless, because they were misunderstood by the ignorant, and tended to inflame the masses against the leaders. It seemed necessary, therefore, to return to the pacific propaganda. Tikhomirov, who was nominally directing the movement from abroad, became utterly discouraged, and wrote in 1884 to one of his emissaries in Russia (Lopátin): "You now see Russia, and can convince yourself that it does not possess the material for a vast work of reorganisation. . . . I advise you seriously not to make superhuman efforts, and not to make a scandal in attempting the impossible. . . . If you do not want to satisfy yourself with trifles, come away and await better times."

In examining the material relating to this period one sees clearly that the revolutionary movement had got into a

vicious circle. As pacific propaganda had become impossible, in consequence of the opposition of the authorities and the vigilance of the police, the Government could be overturned only by a general insurrection; but the general insurrection could not be prepared without pacific propaganda. As for terrorism, it had become discredited. Tikhomirov himself came to the conclusion that the terrorist idea was altogether a mistake, not only morally, but also from the point of view of political expediency. A party, he explained, has either the force to overthrow the Government, or it has not; in the former case it has no need of political assassination, and in the latter the assassinations have no effect, because Governments are not so stupid as to let themselves be frightened by those who cannot overthrow them. Plainly there was nothing to be done but to wait for better times, as he had suggested, and the better times did not seem to be within measurable distance. He himself, after publishing a brochure entitled "Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionist," made his peace with the Government, and others followed his example. In one prison nine made formal recantations, among them Emiliánov, who held a reserve bomb ready when Alexander II. was assassinated.

Occasional acts of terrorism showed that there was still fire under the smouldering embers, but such acts were few and far between. The last serious incident of the kind during this period was the regicide conspiracy of Sheviryév in March, 1887. The conspirators, carrying the bombs, were arrested in the principal street of St. Petersburg, and five of them were hanged. The railway accident of Borki, which happened in the following year, and in which the Imperial family had a very narrow escape, ought perhaps to be added to the list, because there is reason to believe that it was the work of Revolutionists.

By this time all the cooler heads among the Revolutionists, especially those who were living abroad in personal safety, had come to understand that the Socialist ideal could not be attained by popular insurrection, terrorism, or conspiracies, and consequently that further activity on the old lines was absurd. Those of them who did not abandon the enterprise in despair reverted to the idea that the Autocratic

Power, impregnable against frontal attacks, might be destroyed by prolonged siege operations. This change of tactics is reflected in the revolutionary literature. In 1889, for example, the editor of the *Svobódnaya Rossía* declared that the aim of the movement now was political freedom—not only as a stepping-stone to social reorganisation, but as a good in itself. This is, he explains, the only revolution possible at present in Russia. "For the moment there can be no other immediate practical aim. Ulterior aims are not abandoned, but they are not at present within reach. . . . The Revolutionists of the 'seventies and the 'eighties did not succeed in creating among the peasantry or the town workmen anything which had even the appearance of a force capable of struggling with the Government; and the Revolutionists of the future will have no greater success until they have obtained such political rights as personal inviolability. Our immediate aim, therefore, is a National Assembly controlled by local self-government, and this can be brought about only by a union of all the revolutionary forces."

There were still indications, it is true, that the old spirit of terrorism was not yet quite extinct: Captain Zolotýkhin, for example, an officer of the Moscow secret police, was assassinated by a female revolutionist in 1890. But such incidents were merely the last fitful sputterings of a lamp that was going out for want of oil. In 1892 Stepniak declared it evident to all that the professional Revolutionists could not alone overthrow autocracy, however great their energy and heroism; and he arrived at the same conclusion as the writer just quoted. After reviewing the situation as a whole, he says: "It is only from the evolutionist's point of view that the struggle with autocracy has a meaning. From any other standpoint it must seem a sanguinary farce—a mere exercise in the art of self-sacrifice!" Such are the conclusions arrived at in 1892 by a man who had been in 1878 one of the leading Terrorists, and who had with his own hand assassinated General Mezentsev, Chief of the Political Police.

Thus the revolutionary movement, after passing through four stages, which I may call the academic, the propagandist, the insurrectionary, and the terrorist, had failed to accomplish its object. One of those who had taken an active part

in it, and who, after spending two years in Siberia as a political exile, escaped and settled in Western Europe, could write thus: "Our revolutionary movement is dead, and we who are still alive stand by the bier of our beautiful departed, and discuss what is wanting in her. One of us thinks that her nose might be improved; another suggests a change in her chin or her hair. We do not notice the essential, that what our beautiful departed wants is life; that it is not a matter of hair or eyebrows, but of a living soul, which formerly concealed all defects and made her beautiful, and which now has flown away. Any changes and improvements which we may imagine are utterly insignificant in comparison with what is really wanting, and what we cannot give; for who can breathe a living soul into a corpse?"

In truth, the movement which I have endeavoured to describe was at an end; but another movement, having the same ultimate object, was coming into existence, and it constitutes one of the essential factors of the present situation. Some of the exiles in Switzerland and Paris had become acquainted with the Social Democratic and Labour movements in Western Europe, and they believed that the strategy and tactics employed in these movements might be adopted in Russia. How far they have succeeded in carrying out this policy, I shall relate presently; but before entering on this subject I must explain how the application of such a policy had been rendered possible by changes in the economic conditions. Russia had begun to create rapidly a great manufacturing industry and an industrial proletariat. This will form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVI

INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS AND THE PROLETARIAT

FIFTY years ago Russia was still essentially a peasant Empire, living by agriculture of a primitive type, and supplying her other wants chiefly by home industries, as was the custom in Western Europe during the Middle Ages.

For many generations her rulers had been trying to transplant into their wide dominions the arts and crafts of the West, but they had formidable difficulties to contend with, and their success was not nearly so great as they desired. We know that as far back as the fourteenth century there were cloth-workers in Moscow, for we read in the chronicles that the workshops of these artisans were sacked when the town was stormed by the Tartars. Workers in metal also had appeared in some of the larger towns by that time, but they do not seem to have risen much above the level of ordinary blacksmiths. They were destined, however, to make more rapid progress than other classes of artisans, because the old Tsars of Muscovy, like other semi-barbarous potentates, admired and envied the industries of more civilised countries mainly from the military point of view. What they wanted most was a plentiful supply of good arms wherewith to defend themselves and attack their neighbours, and it was to this object that their most strenuous efforts were directed.

As early as 1475 Ivan III., the grandfather of Ivan the Terrible, sent a delegate to Venice to seek out for him an architect who, in addition to his own craft, knew how to make guns; and in due course appeared in the Kremlin a certain Muroli, called Aristotle by his contemporaries on account of his profound learning. He undertook "to build churches and palaces, to cast big bells and cannons, to fire off the said cannons, and to make every sort of castings very cunningly"; and for the exercise of these various arts

it was solemnly stipulated in a formal document that he should receive the modest salary of ten roubles monthly. With regard to the military products, at least, the Venetian faithfully fulfilled his contract, and in a short time the Tsar had the satisfaction of possessing a "cannon-house," subsequently dignified with the name of "arsenal." Some of the natives learned the foreign art, and just over a century later (1586) a Russian, or at least a Slav, called Tchekhov, produced a famous "Tsar-cannon," weighing as much as 96,000 lbs.

The connection thus established with the mechanical arts of the West was always afterwards maintained, and we find frequent notices of the fact in contemporary writers. In the reign of the grandfather of Peter the Great, for example, two paper-works were established by an Italian; and velvet for the Tsar and his *Boyárs,* gold brocades for ecclesiastical vestments, and rude kinds of glass for ordinary purposes were manufactured under the august patronage of the enlightened ruler. His son Alexis went a good many steps farther, and scandalised his God-fearing Orthodox subjects by his love of foreign heretical inventions. It was in his German suburb of Moscow that young Peter, who was to become "the Great," made his first acquaintance with the useful arts of the West.

When the great reformer came to the throne he found in his Tsardom, besides many workshops, some ten foundries, all of which were under orders "to cast cannons, bombs, and bullets, and to make arms for the service of the State." This seemed to him only a beginning, especially for the mining and iron industry, in which he was particularly interested. By importing foreign artificers and placing at their disposal big estates, with numerous serfs, in the districts where minerals were plentiful, and by carefully stipulating that these foreigners should teach his subjects well, and conceal from them none of the secrets of the craft, he created in the Ural a great iron industry, which still exists at the present day. Finding by experience that State mines and State ironworks were a heavy drain on his insufficiently filled treasury, he transferred some of them to private persons, and this policy was followed occasion-

ally by his successors. Hence the gigantic fortunes of the Demidovs and other families. The Shuválovs, for example, in 1760 possessed, for the purpose of working their mines and ironworks, no less than 33,000 serfs and a corresponding amount of land. Unfortunately, the concessions were generally given, not to enterprising business men, but to influential Court dignitaries, who confined their attention to squandering the revenues, and not a few of the mines and works reverted to the Government.

The army required not only arms and ammunition, but also uniforms and blankets. Great attention, therefore, was paid to the woollen industry from the reign of Peter downwards. In the time of Catherine there were already 120 cloth factories, but they were on a very small scale, according to modern conceptions. Ten factories in Moscow, for example, had amongst them only 104 looms, 130 workers, and a yearly output valued at 200,000 roubles.

While thus largely influenced in its economic policy by military considerations, the Government did not entirely neglect other branches of manufacturing industry. Ever since Russia had pretensions to being a civilised power its rulers have always been inclined to pay more attention to the ornamental than the useful—to the varnish rather than the framework of civilisation—and we need not therefore be surprised to find that, long before the native industry could supply the materials required for the ordinary wants of humble life, attempts were made to produce such things as Gobelin tapestries. I mention this merely as an illustration of a characteristic trait of the national character, the influence of which may be found in many other spheres of official activity.

If Russia did not attain the industrial level of Western Europe, it was not from want of ambition and effort on the part of the rulers. They worked hard, if not always wisely, for this end. Manufacturers were exempted from rates and taxes, and even from military service, and some of them, as I have said, received large estates from the Crown on the understanding that the serfs should be employed as workmen. At the same time they were protected from foreign competition by prohibitive tariffs. In a word, the manufac-

turing industry was nursed and fostered in a way to satisfy the most thoroughgoing Protectionist, especially those branches which worked up native raw material such as ores, flax, hemp, wool, and tallow. Occasionally the official interference and anxiety to protect public interests went farther than the manufacturers desired. On more than one occasion the authorities fixed the price of certain kinds of manufactured goods, and in 1754 the Senate, being anxious to protect the population against fires, ordered all glass and iron works within a radius of 200 versts around Moscow to be destroyed! In spite of such obstacles, the manufacturing industry as a whole made considerable progress. Between 1729 and 1762 the number of establishments officially recognised as factories rose from 26 to 335.

These results did not satisfy Catherine II., who ascended the throne in 1762. Under the influence of her friends the French Encyclopédistes, she imagined for a time that the official control might be relaxed, and that the system of employing serfs in the factories and foundries might be replaced by free labour, as in Western Europe; monopolies might be abolished, and all liege subjects, including the peasants, might be allowed to embark in industrial undertakings as they pleased, "for the benefit of the State and the nation." All this looked very well on paper, but Catherine never allowed her sentimental Liberalism to injure seriously the interests of her Empire, and she accordingly refrained from putting the *laissez-faire* principle largely into practice. Though a good deal has been written about her economic policy, it is hardly distinguishable from that of her predecessors. Like them, she maintained high tariffs, accorded large subsidies, and even prevented the export of raw material, in the hope that it might be worked up at home; and when the prices in the woollen market rose very high she compelled the manufacturers to supply the army with cloth at a price fixed by the authorities. In short, the old system remained practically unimpaired, and notwithstanding the steady progress made during the reign of Nicholas I. (1825-55), when the number of factory hands rose from 210,000 to 380,000, the manufacturing industry as a whole continued to be, until the serfs were emancipated

in 1861, a hothouse plant which could flourish only in an officially heated atmosphere.

There was one branch of it, however, to which this remark does not apply. The art of cotton-spinning and cotton-weaving struck deep root in Russian soil. After remaining for generations in the condition of a cottage industry—the yarn being distributed among the peasants, and worked up by them in their own homes—it began, about 1825, to be modernised. Though it still required to be protected against foreign competition, it rapidly outgrew the necessity for direct official support. Big factories driven by steam-power were constructed, the number of hands employed rose to 110,000, and the foundations of great fortunes were laid. Strange to say, many of the future millionaires were uneducated serfs. Sava Morózov, for example, who was to become one of the industrial magnates of Moscow, was a serf belonging to a proprietor called Ryumin; most of the others were serfs of Count Sheremetyev —the owner of a large estate on which the industrial town of Ivanovo had sprung up—who was proud of having millionaires among his serfs, and who never abused his authority over them. The great movement, however, was not effected without the assistance of foreigners. Foreign foremen were largely employed, and in the work of organisation a leading part was played by a German called Ludwig Knoop. Beginning life as a commercial traveller for an English firm, he soon became a large cotton importer, and when in 1840 a feverish activity was produced in the Russian manufacturing world by the Government's permission to import English machines, his firm supplied these machines to the factories on condition of obtaining a share in the business. It has been calculated that it obtained in this way a share in no less than 122 factories, and hence arose among the peasantry a popular saying:

"Where there is a church, there you find a pope,
And where there is a factory, there you find a Knoop."*

The biggest creation of the firm was a factory built at Narva

* Gdye tserkov—tam pop;
A gdye fabrika—tam Knop.

in 1856, with nearly half a million spindles driven by water-power.

In the second half of last century a revolution was brought about in the manufacturing industry generally by the emancipation of the serfs, the rapid extension of railways, the facilities for creating limited liability companies, and by certain innovations in the financial policy of the Government. The emancipation put on the market an unlimited supply of cheap labour; the construction of railways in all directions increased a hundredfold the means of communication; and the new banks and other credit institutions, aided by an overwhelming influx of foreign capital, encouraged the foundation and extension of industrial and commercial enterprises of every description. For a time there was great excitement. It was commonly supposed that in all matters relating to trade and industry Russia had suddenly jumped up to the level of Western Europe, and many people in St. Petersburg, carried away by the prevailing enthusiasm for Liberalism in general and the doctrines of Free Trade in particular, were in favour of abolishing Protection as an antiquated restriction on liberty and an obstacle to economic progress.

At one moment the Government was disposed to yield to the current, but it was restrained by an influential group of conservative political economists, who appealed to patriotic sentiment, and by the Moscow manufacturers, who declared that Free Trade would ruin the country. After a little hesitation it proceeded to raise, instead of lower, the Protectionist tariff. In 1869-76 the *ad valorem* duties were, on an average, under thirteen per cent., but from that time onwards they rose steadily until the last five years of the century, when they averaged thirty-three per cent., and were for some articles very much higher. In this way the Moscow industrial magnates were protected against the influx of cheap foreign goods, but they were not saved from foreign competition, for many foreign manufacturers, in order to enjoy the benefit of the high duties, founded factories in Russia. Even the firmly established cotton industry suffered from these intruders. Industrial suburbs containing not a few cotton factories owned by foreign capitalists sprang up

around St. Petersburg; and a small Polish village called Lodz, near the German frontier, grew rapidly into a prosperous town of 400,000 inhabitants, and became a serious rival to the ancient Muscovite capital. So severely was the competition of this young upstart felt that the Moscow merchants petitioned the Emperor to protect them by drawing a customs frontier round the Polish provinces, but their petition was not granted.

Under the shelter of the high tariffs the manufacturing industry as a whole has made rapid progress, and the cotton trade has kept well to the front. At the beginning of 1909, according to the official reports, the number of industrial establishments of all kinds under Government inspection amounted to 32,601, employing 2,042,115 hands.

The progress of the mineral industries has been not less remarkable than that of the cotton manufacturers. Originally confined to the northern parts of the country, they received about half a century ago a powerful impulse from the discovery that some of the southern provinces, especially the Don basin, contained in close proximity to each other enormous quantities of iron ore and large beds of good coal. Thanks to this discovery, and to other facts of which I shall have occasion to speak presently, this district, which had previously been purely agricultural and pastoral, has outstripped the famous Ural region, and has become the Black Country of Russia. The vast lonely Steppe, where formerly one saw merely peasant-farmers, shepherds, and the *Tchumák*,* driving along somnolently with his big, long-horned white bullocks, is now dotted over with busy industrial settlements of mushroom growth and great ironworks; while at night the landscape is lit up with the lurid flames of gigantic blast-furnaces. In this wonderful transformation, as in the history of Russian industrial progress generally, a great part was played by foreigners. The pioneer who did most in this district was a Welshman, John Hughes, who began life as the son and pupil of a

* The *Tchumák*, a familiar figure in the songs and legends of Little Russia, was the carrier who, before the construction of railways, transported the grain to the great markets, and brought back merchandise to the interior.

blacksmith, and whose sons are now directors of the biggest of the South-Russian ironworks.

Much as the South has progressed industrially in recent years, it still remains far behind those industrial portions of the country which were thickly settled at an earlier date. From this point of view the most important region is the group of provinces clustering round Moscow; next comes the St. Petersburg region, including Livonia; and thirdly Poland. As for the various kinds of industry, the most important category is that of textile fabrics, the second that of articles of nutrition, and the third that of ores and metals. The total production, if we may believe certain statistical authorities, places Russia now among the industrial nations of the world in the fifth place, immediately after the United States, England, Germany, and France, and a little before Austria.

The man who has in recent times carried out most energetically the policy of protecting and fostering native industries is M. Witte, a name now familiar to Western Europe. An avowed disciple of the great German economist, Friedrich List, about whose works he published a brochure in 1888, he held firmly, from his youth upwards, the doctrine that "each nation should above all things develop harmoniously its natural resources to the highest possible degree of independence, protecting its own industries and preferring the national aim to the pecuniary advantage of individuals." As a corollary to this principle he declared that purely agricultural countries are economically backward and intellectually stagnant, being condemned to pay tribute to the nations who have learned to work up their raw products into more valuable commodities. The good old English doctrine that certain countries were intended by Providence to be eternally agricultural, and that their function in the economy of the universe is to supply raw material for the industrial nations, was always in his eyes an abomination—an ingenious, nefarious invention of the Manchester school, astutely invented for the purpose of keeping the younger nations permanently in a state of economic bondage for the benefit of English manufacturers. To emancipate Russia from this thraldom by enabling her to

create a great native industry, sufficient to supply all her own wants, was the aim of his policy and the constant object of his untiring efforts. Those who have had the good fortune to know him personally must have often heard him discourse eloquently on this theme, supporting his views by quotations from the economists of his own school, and by illustrations drawn from the history of his own and other countries.

A necessary condition of realising this aim was that there should be high tariffs. These already existed, and they might be raised still higher, but in themselves they were not enough. For the rapid development of native industry an enormous capital was required, and the first problem to be solved was how this capital could be obtained. At one moment the energetic Minister conceived the project of creating a fictitious capital by inflating the paper currency; but this idea proved unpopular, and when broached in the Council of State it encountered determined opposition. Being a practical man without inveterate prejudices, M. Witte gave up the scheme which he could not carry through, and adopted the views of his opponents. He would introduce a gold currency as recommended; but how was the requisite capital to be obtained? It must be procured from abroad, somehow, and the simplest way seemed to be to stimulate the export of native products. For this purpose the railways were extended,* the traffic rates manipulated, and the means of transport improved generally.

A certain influx of gold was thus secured, but not nearly enough for the object in view. Some more potent means, therefore, had to be employed, and the inventive Minister evolved a new scheme. If he could only induce foreign capitalists to undertake manufacturing industries in Russia, they would, at one and the same time, bring into the country an enormous amount of capital, and also co-operate powerfully in that development of the national industry which he so ardently desired. No sooner had he roughly sketched out his plan—for he was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet—than he set himself to put it into execution by letting it be known in the financial world that

* During the ten years of his financial administration (1893-1903) the railway system was extended from 20,287 to 37,128 miles.

the Government was ready to open a great field for lucrative investments, in the form of profitable enterprises under the control of those who subscribed the capital.

Foreign capitalists responded warmly to the call. Crowds of concession-hunters, projectors, company promoters, *et hoc genus omne,* collected in St. Petersburg, offering their services on the most tempting terms; and all of them who could make out a plausible case were well received at the Ministry of Finance. It was there explained to them that in many branches of industry, such as the manufacture of textile fabrics, there was little or no room for new-comers, but that in others the prospects were most brilliant. Take, for example, the iron industries of Southern Russia. The boundless mineral wealth of that region was still almost intact, and the few works which had been there established were paying very large dividends. The works founded by John Hughes, for example, had repeatedly divided considerably over twenty per cent., and there was little fear for the future, because the Government had embarked on a great scheme of railway extension, requiring an unlimited amount of rails and rolling-stock. What better opening could be desired? Certainly the opening seemed most attractive, and into it rushed the crowd of company promoters, followed by stock-jobbers and brokers, playing lively pieces of what the Germans call *Zukunftsmusik.* An unwary and confiding public, especially in Belgium and France, listened to the enchanting strain of the financial sirens, and invested largely. Quickly the number of completed ironworks in that region rose from nine to seventeen, and in the short space of three years the output of pig-iron was nearly doubled. In 1900 there were 44 blast-furnaces in working order, and ten more were in course of construction. And all this time the Imperial revenue increased by leaps and bounds, so that the introduction of the gold currency was effected without difficulty. M. Witte was declared to be the greatest Minister of his time—a Russian Colbert or Turgot, or perhaps the two rolled into one.

Then came a change. Competition and over-production led naturally to a fall in prices, and at the same time the demand decreased, because the railway-building activity of

the Government slackened. Alarmed at this state of things, the banks which had helped to start and foster the huge and costly enterprises contracted their credits. By the end of 1899 the disenchantment was general and widespread. Some of the companies were so weighted by the preliminary financial obligations, and had conducted their affairs in such careless, reckless fashion, that they had to shut down their mines and close their works. Even solid undertakings suffered. The shares of the Briansk works, for example, which had given dividends as high as 30 per cent., fell from 500 to 230. The Mamontov companies—supposed to be one of the strongest financial groups in the country—had to suspend payment, and numerous other failures occurred. Nearly all the commercial banks, having directly participated in the industrial concerns, were rudely shaken. M. Witte, who had been for a time the idol of a certain section of the financial world, became very unpopular, and was accused of having misled the investing public. Among the accusations brought against him some at least could easily be refuted. He may have made mistakes in his policy, and may have been himself over-sanguine, but surely, as he subsequently replied to his accusers, it was no part of his duty to warn company promoters and directors that they should refrain from over-production, and that their enterprises might not be as remunerative as they expected. As to whether there is any truth in the assertion that he held out prospects of larger Government orders than he actually gave, I cannot say. That he cut down prices, and showed himself a hard man to deal with, there seems no doubt.

The reader may naturally be inclined to jump to the conclusion that the commercial crisis just referred to was the direct cause of M. Witte's fall. Such a conclusion would not be quite accurate. The crisis happened in the winter of 1899-1900, and M. Witte remained Finance Minister until the autumn of 1903. His fall was the result of more complicated causes, and these I propose now to explain, because the explanation will throw light on certain very curious and characteristic conceptions which were then current among the Russian educated classes and have not yet entirely disappeared.

Of course there were certain causes of a purely personal kind, but I shall dismiss them in a very few words. I remember once asking a well-informed friend of M. Witte's what he thought of him as an administrator and a statesman. The friend replied: "Imagine a negro of the Gold Coast let loose in modern European civilisation!" This reply, like most epigrammatic remarks, is a piece of gross exaggeration, but it has a modicum of truth in it. In the eyes of well-trained Russian officials M. Witte was a Titanic, reckless character, capable at any moment of playing the part of the bull in the china-shop. As a masterful person, brusque in manner and incapable of brooking contradiction, he had made for himself many enemies; and his restless, irrepressible energy had led him to encroach on the provinces of all his colleagues. Possessing as he did the control of the purse, his interference could not easily be resisted. The Ministers of the Interior, War, Agriculture, Public Works, Public Instruction, and Foreign Affairs had all occasion to complain of his incursions into their departments.

Altogether M. Witte was an inconvenient personage in an Administration in which strong personality is regarded as entirely out of place, and in which personal initiative is supposed to reside exclusively in the Tsar. In addition to all this he was a man who felt keenly, and when he was irritated he did not always keep the unruly member under strict control. If I am correctly informed, it was some imprudent and not very respectful remarks, repeated by a subordinate and transmitted by a Grand Duke to the Tsar, which were the immediate cause of his transfer from the influential post of Minister of Finance to the ornamental position of President of the Council of Ministers; but that was merely the proverbial last straw that breaks the camel's back. His position was already undermined, and it is the undermining process which I wish to describe.

The first to work for his overthrow were the Agrarian Conservatives. They could not deny that, from the purely fiscal point of view, his administration was a marvellous success; for he was rapidly doubling the revenue, and he had succeeded in replacing the fluctuating depreciated paper currency by a gold coinage; but they maintained that he was

killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. Evidently the tax-paying power of the rural classes was being overstrained, for they were falling more and more into arrears in the payment of their taxes, and their impoverishment was yearly increasing. All their reserves had been exhausted, as was shown by the famines of 1891-2, when the Government had to spend hundreds of millions to feed them. Whilst the land was losing its fertility, those who had to live by it were increasing in numbers at an alarming rate. Already in some districts one-fifth of the peasant households had no longer any land of their own, and of those who still possessed land a large proportion had no longer the cattle and horses necessary to till and manure their allotments. No doubt M. Witte was beginning to perceive his mistake, and had done something to palliate the evils by improving the system of collecting the taxes and abolishing the passport dues, but such merely palliative remedies could have little effect. While a few capitalists were amassing gigantic fortunes, the masses were slowly and surely advancing to the brink of starvation. The welfare of the agriculturists, who constitute nine-tenths of the whole population, was being ruthlessly sacrificed, and for what? For the creation of a manufacturing industry which rested on an artificial, precarious basis, and which had already begun to decline.

So far the Agrarians, who championed the interests of the agricultural classes. Their views were confirmed and their arguments strengthened by an influential group of men whom I may call, for want of a better name, the philosophers or doctrinaire interpreters of history, who have, strange to say, more influence in Russia than in any other country.

The Russian educated classes desire that the nation should be wealthy and self-supporting, and they recognise that for this purpose a large manufacturing industry is required; but they are reluctant to make the sacrifices necessary to attain the object in view, and they imagine that, somehow or other, these sacrifices may be avoided. Sympathising with this frame of mind, the doctrinaires explain that the rich and prosperous countries of Europe and America obtained their wealth and prosperity by so-called "Capitalism"—that is to say, by a peculiar social organisa-

tion, in which the two main factors are a small body of rich capitalists and manufacturers, and an enormous pauper proletariat living from hand to mouth, at the mercy of the heartless employers of labour. Russia had lately followed in the footsteps of those wealthy countries, and if she continued to do so she would inevitably be saddled with the same disastrous results—plutocracy, pauperism, unrestrained competition in all spheres of activity, and a greatly intensified struggle for life, in which the weaker would necessarily go to the wall.*

Happily there was, according to these theorists, a more excellent way, and Russia might adopt it if she only remained true to certain mysterious principles of her past historic development. Without attempting to expound those mysterious principles, to which I have repeatedly referred in previous chapters, I may mention briefly that the traditional patriarchal institutions on which the theorists founded their hopes of a happy social future for their country were the rural Commune, the native home industries, and the peculiar co-operative institutions called *Artéls*. How these remnants of a semi-patriarchal state of society were to be practically developed in such a way as to withstand the competition of manufacturing industry organised on modern "Capitalist" lines, no one could explain satisfactorily, but many people indulged in ingenious speculations on the subject, like children planning the means of diverting with their little toy spades a formidable inundation. In my humble opinion, the whole theory was a delusion; but it was held firmly—I might almost say fanatically—by those who, in opposition to the indiscriminate admirers of West-European and American civilisation, considered themselves genuine Russians and exceptionally good patriots. M. Witte never belonged to that class. He believed that there was only one road to national prosperity—the road by which Western Europe had travelled—and along this road he tried to drive his country as rapidly as possible. He threw himself, therefore, heart and soul into what his opponents called

* Free competition in all spheres of activity, leading to social inequality, plutocracy, and pauperism, is the favourite bugbear of Russian theorists; and who is not a theorist in Russia? The fact indicates the prevalence of Socialist ideas among the educated classes.

"Capitalism," by raising State loans, organising banks and other credit institutions, encouraging the creation and extension of big factories, which must inevitably destroy the home industries, and even—*horribile dictu!*—undermining the rural Commune, and thereby adding to the ranks of the landless proletariat, in order to increase the amount of cheap labour for the benefit of the capitalists.

With the arguments thus supplied by Agrarians and doctrinaires, quite honest and well-meaning according to their lights, it was easy to sap M. Witte's position. Among his opponents, the most formidable was the late M. Plehve, Minister of the Interior—a man of a totally different stamp. A few months before his tragic end, I had a long and interesting conversation with him, and I came away deeply impressed. Having repeatedly had conversations of a similar kind with M. Witte, I could compare, or rather contrast, the two men. Both of them evidently possessed an exceptional amount of mental power and energy, but in the one it was volcanic, and in the other it was concentrated and thoroughly under control. In discussion, the one reminded me of the self-taught, slashing swordsman; the other of the dexterous fencer, carefully trained in the use of the foils, who never launches out beyond the point at which he can quickly recover himself. As to whether M. Plehve was anything more than a bold, energetic, clever official, there may be differences of opinion, but he certainly could assume the airs of a profound and polished statesman, capable of looking at things from a much higher point of view than the ordinary *tchinóvnik,* and he had the talent of tacitly suggesting that a great deal of genuine, enlightened statesmanship lay hidden under the smooth surface of his cautious reserve. When speaking of his colleague, M. Witte, his language was most correct, but it was not difficult to infer that he was decidedly hostile to the policy of the Ministry of Finance.

From other sources I learned the chief cause of this hostility. Being Minister of the Interior, and having served long in the Police Department, M. Plehve considered that his first duty was the maintenance of public order and the protection of the person and autocracy of his august master.

He was therefore the determined enemy of revolutionary tendencies, in whatever garb or disguise they might appear; and as a statesman he had to direct his attention to everything likely to increase those tendencies in the future. Now it seemed to him that in the financial policy which had been followed for some years there were germs of future revolutionary fermentation. The peasantry were becoming impoverished, and were therefore more likely to listen to the insidious suggestions of Socialist agitators; and already agrarian disturbances had occurred in the provinces of Kharkov and Poltava. The industrial proletariat which was being rapidly created was being secretly organised by the revolutionary Social Democrats, and already there had been serious labour troubles in some of the large towns. For any future revolutionary movement the proletariat would naturally supply recruits. Then, at the other end of the social scale, a class of rich capitalists was being created, and everybody who has read a little history knows that a rich and powerful *tiers-état* cannot be permanently conciliated with autocracy. Though himself neither an Agrarian nor a Slavophil doctrinaire, M. Plehve could not but have a certain sympathy with those who were forging thunderbolts for the official annihilation of M. Witte. He was too practical a man to imagine that the hands on the dial of economic progress could be set back and a return made to moribund patriarchal institutions; but he thought that at least the pace might be moderated. The Minister of Finance need not be in such a desperate, reckless hurry, and it was desirable to create conservative forces which might counteract the revolutionary forces which his impulsive colleague was inadvertently calling into existence.

Some of the forgers of thunderbolts went a great deal farther, and asserted or insinuated that M. Witte was himself consciously a revolutionist, with secret, malevolent intentions. In support of their insinuations they cited certain cases in which well-known Socialists had been appointed professors in academies under the control of the Ministry of Finance, and they pointed to the Peasant Bank, which enjoyed M. Witte's special protection. At first it had been supposed that the bank would have an anti-revolutionary

influence by preventing the formation of a landless proletariat and increasing the number of small landowners, who are always and everywhere conservative so far as the rights of private property are concerned. Unfortunately its success roused the fears of the more conservative section of the landed proprietors. These gentlemen, as I have already mentioned, pointed out that the estates of the nobles were rapidly passing into the hands of the peasantry, and that, if this process were allowed to continue, the hereditary noblesse, which had always been the surest support of the throne, would drift into the towns and there sink into poverty or amalgamate with the commercial plutocracy. Thus they would help to form a *tiers-état*, which would be hostile to the Autocratic Power.

In these circumstances it was evident that the headstrong Minister of Finance could maintain his position only so long as he enjoyed the energetic support of the Emperor, and this support, for reasons which I have indicated above, failed him at the critical moment. While his work was still unfinished he was suddenly compelled to relinquish his post and accept a position in which, it was supposed, he would cease to have any great influence on the Administration.

Thus fell the Russian Colbert-Turgot, or whatever else he may be called. Whether financial difficulties in the future will lead to his reinstatement as Minister of Finance remains to be seen; but in any case his work cannot be undone. He has increased manufacturing industry to an unprecedented extent, and, as M. Plehve perceived, the industrial proletariat, which manufacturing industry on capitalist lines always creates, has provided a new field of activity for the revolutionists. I return, therefore, to the development of the revolutionary movement in order to describe its more recent phases.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A NEW PHASE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

THE development of manufacturing industry on capitalist lines, and the consequent formation of a large industrial proletariat, naturally produced great disappointment among the numerous theorists who had believed that in some way or other Russia would escape "the festering sores of Western civilisation." Experience had proved that the belief was an illusion, and those who had tried to check the natural course of industrial progress were constrained to confess that their efforts had been futile. Big factories were increasing in size and numbers, while cottage industries were disappearing or falling under the power of middlemen, and the *Artéls* had not advanced a step in their expected development. The factory workers, all of peasant origin, were losing their connection with their native villages, and abandoning their allotments of the Communal land. They were becoming, in short, an hereditary caste in the town population, and the Slavophil dream of every factory worker having a house in the country could no longer be indulged in. Nor was there any prospect of a change for the better in the future. With the increase of competition among the manufacturers, the uprooting of the muzhik from the soil must go on more and more rapidly, because employers must insist more and more on having thoroughly trained operatives ready to work steadily all the year round.

This state of things had a curious effect on the course of the revolutionary movement.

Let me recall very briefly the successive stages through which the movement had already passed. It had been inaugurated, as we have seen, by the Nihilists, the ardent young representatives of a "storm-and-stress" period, in which the venerable traditions and respected principles of the past were rejected and ridiculed, and the newest ideas

of Western Europe were eagerly adopted and distorted. Like the majority of their educated countrymen, they believed that, in the race of progress, Russia was about to overtake and surpass the nations of the West, and that this desirable result was to be attained by making a *tabula rasa* of existing institutions, and reconstructing society according to the plans of Proudhon, Fourier, and the other writers of the early Socialist school.

When the Nihilists had expended their energies and exhausted the patience of the public in theorising, talking, and writing, a party of action came upon the scene. Like the Nihilists, they desired political, social, and economic reforms of the most thoroughgoing kind, but they believed that such things could not be effected by the educated classes alone, and they determined to call in the co-operation of the people. For this purpose they tried to convert the masses to the gospel of Socialism. Hundreds of them became missionaries and "went in among the people." But the gospel of Socialism proved unintelligible to the uneducated, and the more ardent, incautious missionaries fell into the hands of the police. Those of them who escaped, perceiving the error of their ways, but still clinging to the hope of bringing about a political, social, and economic revolution, determined to change their tactics. The emancipated serf had shown himself incapable of "prolonged revolutionary activity," but there was reason to believe that he was, like his forefathers in the time of Stenka Razin and Pugatchev, capable of rising and murdering his oppressors. He must be used, therefore, for the destruction of the Autocratic Power and the bureaucracy, and then it would be easy to reorganise society on a basis of universal equality, and to take permanent precautions against capitalism and the creation of a Proletariat. This was the second phase of the movement.

The hopes of the agitators proved as delusive as those of the propagandists. The muzhik turned a deaf ear to their instigations, and the police soon prevented their further activity. Thus the would-be root-and-branch reformers found themselves in a dilemma. Either they must abandon their schemes for the moment or they must strike immediately

at their persecutors. They chose, as we have seen, the latter alternative, and after vain attempts to frighten the Government by acts of terrorism against zealous officials, they assassinated the Tsar himself; but before they had time to think of the constructive part of their task, their organisation was destroyed by the Autocratic Power and the bureaucracy, and those of them who escaped arrest had to seek safety in emigration to Switzerland and Paris. Thus ended the third phase.

Then arose, all along the line of the defeated, decimated Revolutionists, the cry, "What is to be done?" Some replied that the shattered organisation should be reconstructed, and a number of secret agents were sent successively from Switzerland for this purpose. But their efforts, as they themselves confessed, were fruitless, and despondency seemed to be settling down permanently on all, except a few fanatics, when a voice was heard calling on the fugitives to rally round a new banner and carry on the struggle by entirely new methods. The voice came from a revolutionologist (if I may use such a term) of remarkable talent, called M. Plekhánov, who had settled in Geneva with a little circle of friends, calling themselves the "Labour-Emancipation Group." His views were expounded in a series of interesting publications, the first of which was a brochure entitled "Socialism and the Political Struggle," published in 1883.

According to M. Plekhánov and his disciples the revolutionary movement had been conducted up to that moment on altogether wrong lines. All previous revolutionary groups had acted on the assumption that the political revolution and the economic reorganisation of society must be effected simultaneously, and consequently they had rejected contemptuously all proposals for reforms, however radical, of a merely political kind. These had been considered, as I have mentioned in a previous chapter, not only as worthless, but as positively prejudicial to the interests of the working classes, because so-called political liberties and parliamentary government would be sure to consolidate the domination of the *bourgeoisie*. That such had generally been the immediate effect of parliamentary institutions was admitted, but

it did not follow that the creation of such institutions should be opposed. On the contrary, they ought to be welcomed, not merely because, as some revolutionists had already pointed out, propaganda and agitation could be more easily carried on under a constitutional regime, but because constitutionalism is certainly the most convenient, and perhaps the only, road by which the socialistic ideal can ultimately be attained. This is a dark saying, but it will become clearer when I have explained, according to the new apostles, a second error into which their predecessors had fallen.

That second error was the assumption that all true friends of the people, whether Conservatives, Liberals, or Revolutionaries, ought to oppose to the utmost the development of capitalism. In the light of Karl Marx's discoveries in economic science everyone must recognise this to be an egregious mistake. That great authority, it was said, had proved that the development of capitalism was irresistible, and his conclusions had been confirmed by the recent history of Russia, for all the economic progress made during the last half-century had been on capitalist lines.

Even if it were possible to arrest the capitalist movement it is not desirable from the revolutionary point of view. In support of this thesis Karl Marx is again cited. He has shown that capitalism, though an evil in itself, is a necessary stage of economic and social progress. At first it is prejudicial to the interests of the working classes, but in the long run it benefits them, because the ever-growing Proletariat must, whether it desires it or not, become a political party, and as a political party it must one day break the domination of the *bourgeoisie*. As soon as it has obtained the predominant political power, it will confiscate, for the public good, the instruments of production—factories, foundries, machines, etc.—by expropriating the capitalists. In this way all the profits which accrue from production on a large scale, and which at present go into the pockets of the capitalists, will be distributed equally among the workmen.

Thus began the fourth phase of the revolutionary movement, and, like all previous phases, it remained for some years in the academic stage, during which there were endless

discussions on theoretical and practical questions. Lavróv, the prophet of the old propaganda, treated the new ideas "with grandfatherly severity," and Tikhomirov, the leading representative of the moribund *Narodnaya Volya*, which had prepared the acts of terrorism, maintained stoutly that the West European methods recommended by Plekhánov were inapplicable to Russia. The Plekhánov group replied in a long series of publications, partly original, and partly translations from Marx and Engels, explaining the doctrines and aims of the Social Democrats.

Seven years were spent in this academic literary activity —a period of comparative repose for the Russian secret police —and then, about 1890, the propagandists of the new school began to work cautiously in St. Petersburg. At first they confined themselves to forming little secret circles for making converts, and they found that the ground had been to some extent prepared for the seed which they had to sow. The workmen were discontented, and some of the more intelligent amongst them, who had formerly been in touch with the propagandists of the older generation, had learned that there was an ingenious and effective means of getting their grievances redressed. How was that possible? By combinations and strikes. For the uneducated workers this was an important discovery, and they soon began to put the suggested remedy to a practical test. In the autumn of 1894 labour troubles broke out in the Nevski engineering works and the arsenal, and in the following year in the Thornton factory and the cigarette manufactories. In all these strikes the Social Democratic agents took part behind the scenes. Avoiding the main errors of the old propagandists, who had offered the workmen merely abstract Socialist theories which no uneducated person could reasonably be expected to understand, they adopted a more rational method. Though impervious to abstract theories, the Russian workman is not at all insensible to the prospect of bettering his material condition, and getting his everyday grievances redressed. Of these grievances the ones he felt most keenly were the long hours, the low wages, the fines arbitrarily imposed by the managers, and the brutal severity of the foremen. By helping him to have these grievances removed, the Social

Democratic agents might gain his confidence, and when they had come to be regarded by him as his real friends they might widen his sympathies, and teach him to feel that his personal interests were identical with the interests of the working classes as a whole. In this way it would be possible to awaken in the industrial proletariat generally a sort of esprit de corps, which is the first condition of political organisation.

On these lines the agents set to work. Having formed themselves into a secret association called the "Union for the Emancipation of the Working Classes," they gradually abandoned the narrow limits of coterie-propaganda and prepared the way for agitation on a larger scale. Among the discontented workmen they distributed a large number of carefully written tracts, in which the material grievances were formulated, and the whole political system, with its police, gendarmes, Cossacks, and tax-gatherers, was criticised in no friendly spirit, but without violent language. In introducing into the programme this political element, great caution had to be exercised, because the workmen did not yet perceive clearly any close connection between their grievances and the existing political institutions, and those of them who belonged to the older generation regarded the Tsar as the incarnation of disinterested benevolence. Bearing this in mind, the Union circulated a pamphlet for the enlightenment of the labouring population, in which the writer refrained from all reference to the Autocratic Power, and described simply the condition of the labouring classes, the heavy burdens they had to bear, the abuses of which they were the victims, and the inconsiderate way in which they were treated by their employers. This pamphlet was eagerly read, and from that moment, whenever labour troubles arose, the men applied to the Social Democratic agents to assist them in formulating their grievances.

Of course, the assistance had to be given secretly, because there were always police spies in the factories, and all persons suspected of aiding the labour movement were liable to be arrested and exiled. On January 4th, 1896, for example, when the Social Democrats were holding a secret meeting, 115 of them were arrested by the police. Notwithstanding

this incident and others of a similar kind, the work was carried on with great energy, and in the summer of 1896 the field of operations was extended. During the coronation ceremonies of that year the factories and workshops in St. Petersburg were closed, and the men considered that for these days they ought to receive wages as usual. When their demand was refused, 30,000 of them went out on strike. The Social Democratic Union seized the opportunity and distributed tracts in large quantities. For the first time such tracts were read aloud at workmen's meetings and applauded by the audience. The Union encouraged the workmen in their resistance, but advised them to refrain from violence, so as not to provoke the intervention of the police and the military, as they had imprudently done on some previous occasions. When the police did intervene and expelled some of the strike leaders from St. Petersburg, the agitators had an excellent opportunity of explaining that the authorities were the protectors of the employers and the enemies of the working classes. These explanations counteracted the effect of an official proclamation to the workmen, in which M. Witte tried to convince them that the Tsar was constantly striving to improve their condition. The struggle was decided, not by arguments and exhortations, but by a more potent force: having no funds for continuing the strike, the men were compelled by starvation to resume work.

This is the point at which the labour movement began to be conducted on a large scale and by more systematic methods. In the earlier labour troubles, the strikers had not understood that the best means of bringing pressure on employers was simply to refuse to work, and they had often proceeded to show their dissatisfaction by ruthlessly destroying their employers' property. This had brought the police, and sometimes the military, on the scene, and numerous arrests had followed. Another mistake made by the inexperienced strikers was that they had neglected to create a reserve fund from which they could draw the means of subsistence when they no longer received wages and could no longer obtain credit at the factory provision store. Efforts were now made to correct these two mistakes, and with regard to the former they were fairly successful, for wanton destruction

of property ceased to be a prominent feature of labour troubles; but strong reserve funds have not yet been created, so that the strikes have never been of long duration.

Though the strikes had led, so far, to no great practical, tangible results, the new ideas and aspirations were spreading rapidly in the factories and workshops, and they had already struck such deep root that some of the genuine workmen wished to have a voice in the managing committee of the Union, which was composed exclusively of educated men. When a request to that effect was rejected by the committee a lengthy discussion took place, and it soon became evident that underneath the question of organisation lay a most important question of principle. The workmen wished to concentrate their efforts on the improvement of their material condition, and to proceed on what we should call trade-unionist lines, whereas the committee wished them to aim also at the acquisition of political rights. Great determination was shown on both sides. An attempt of the workmen to found and disseminate a secret periodical of their own with the view of emancipating themselves from the "Politicals" ended in failure; but they received sympathy and support from some of the educated members of the party, and in this way a schism took place in the Social Democrat camp. After repeated ineffectual attempts to find a satisfactory compromise the question was submitted to a Congress, which was held in Switzerland in 1900; but the discussions merely accentuated the differences of opinion, and the two parties constituted themselves into separate independent groups. The one following Plekhánov, and calling itself the Revolutionary Social Democrats, held to the Marx doctrines in all their extent and purity, and maintained the necessity of constant agitation in the political sense. The other, calling itself the Union of Foreign Social Democrats, inclined to the trade-unionism programme, and proclaimed the necessity of being guided by political expediency rather than inflexible dogmas. Between the two groups a wordy warfare was carried on for some time in pedantic, technical language; but, though habitually brandishing their weapons and denouncing their antagonists in true Homeric style, they were really allies, struggling

towards a common end—two sections of the Social Democratic party differing from each other merely on questions of tactics.

The two divergent tendencies have often reappeared in the subsequent history of the movement. During ordinary peaceful times the economic or trade-unionist tendency can generally hold its own, but as soon as disturbances occur and the authorities have to intervene, the political current quickly gains the upper hand. This was exemplified in the labour troubles which took place at Rostov-on-the-Don in 1902. During the first two days of the strike the economic demands alone were put forward, and in the speeches which were delivered at the meetings of workmen no reference was made to political grievances. On the third day one orator ventured to speak disrespectfully of the Autocratic Power, but he thereby provoked signs of dissatisfaction in the audience. On the fifth and following days, however, several political speeches were made, ending with the cry of "Down with Tsarism!" and a crowd of 30,000 workmen agreed with the speakers. Thereafter occurred similar strikes in Odessa, the Caucasus, Kief, and Central Russia, and they all had a political rather than a purely economic character.

I must now endeavour to explain clearly the point of view and plan of campaign of this new movement, which I may call the revolutionary Renaissance.

The ultimate aim of the new reformers was the same as that of all their predecessors—the thorough reorganisation of Society on Socialistic principles. According to their doctrines, Society as at present constituted consists of two great classes, called variously the exploiters and the exploited, the shearers and the shorn, the capitalists and the workers, the employers and the employed, the tyrants and the oppressed; and this unsatisfactory state of things must go on so long as the so-called *bourgeois* or capitalist regime continues to exist. In the new heaven and the new earth of which the Socialist dreams, this unjust distinction is to disappear; all human beings are to be equally free and independent, all are to co-operate spontaneously with brains and hands to the common good, and all are to enjoy in equal shares the natural and artificial good things of this life.

So far there has never been any difference of opinion among the various groups of Russian thorough-going revolutionists. All of them, from the antiquated Nihilist down to the Social Democrat of the latest type, have held these views. What has differentiated them from each other is the greater or less degree of impatience to realise the ideal.

The most impatient were the Anarchists, who grouped themselves around Bakúnin. They wished to overthrow immediately by a frontal attack all existing forms of government and social organisation, in the hope that chance, or evolution, or natural instinct, or sudden inspiration, or some other mysterious force, would create something better. They themselves declined to aid this mysterious force even by suggestions, on the ground that, as one of them has said, "to construct is not the business of the generation whose duty is to destroy." Notwithstanding the strong impulsive element in the national character, these reckless, ultra-impatient doctrinaires never became numerous, and never succeeded in forming an organised group, probably because the young generation in Russia were too much occupied with the actual and future condition of their own country to embark on schemes of cosmopolitan anarchism such as Bakúnin recommended.

Next in the scale of impatience came the group of believers in Socialist agitation among the masses, with a view to overturning the existing Government and putting themselves in its place as soon as the masses were sufficiently organised to play the part destined for them. Between them and the Anarchists the essential points of difference were that they admitted the necessity of some years of preparation, and they intended, when the existing regime was overturned, not to preserve indefinitely the state of anarchy, but to put in the place of autocracy, limited monarchy, or the republic, a strong, despotic, provisional Government thoroughly imbued with Socialistic principles. As soon as this temporary despotism had laid firmly the foundations of the new order of things it was to call together a National Assembly, from which it was to receive, I presume, a bill of indemnity for the benevolent tyranny which it had temporarily exercised during the period of transition.

Impatience a few degrees less intense produced the next group, the partisans of pacific Socialist propaganda. They maintained that there was no necessity for overthrowing the old order of things till the masses had been intellectually prepared for the new, and they objected to the foundation of the new regime being laid by despots, however well-intentioned in the Socialist sense. The people must be made happy and preserved in a state of happiness by the people themselves.

In the last place came the least impatient of all, the Social Democrats, who differ widely from all the preceding categories.

All previous revolutionary groups had systematically rejected the idea of a gradual transition from the *bourgeois* to the Socialist regime. They would not listen to any suggestion about a constitutional monarchy or a democratic republic even as a mere intermediate stage of social development. All such things, as part and parcel of the *bourgeois* system, were anathematised. There must be no half-way houses between present misery and future happiness; for many weary travellers might be tempted to settle there in the desert, and fail to reach the promised land. "Ever onward" should be the watchword, and no time should be wasted on the foolish struggles of political parties and the empty vanities of political life.

Not thus thought the Social Democrat. He was much wiser in his generation. Having seen how the attempts of the impatient groups had ended in disaster, and knowing that, if they had succeeded, the old effete bureaucracy would probably have been replaced by a young, vigorous despotism more objectionable than its predecessor, he determined to try a more circuitous but surer road to the goal which the impatient revolutionaries had in view. In his opinion the distance from the present Russian regime protected by autocracy to the future Socialist paradise was far too great to be traversed in a single stage, and he knew of one or two comfortable rest-houses on the way. First there was the rest-house of Constitutionalism, with parliamentary institutions. For some years the *bourgeoisie* would doubtless have a parliamentary majority, but gradually, by persistent effort,

the Fourth Estate would gain the upper hand, and then the Socialist millennium might be proclaimed. Meanwhile, what had to be done was to gain the confidence of the masses, especially of the factory workers, who were more intelligent and less conservative than the peasantry, and to create powerful labour organisations as material for a future political party.

This programme implied, of course, a certain unity of action with the constitutionalists, from whom, as I have said, the revolutionists of the old school had stood sternly aloof. There was now no question of a formal union, and certainly no idea of "a union of hearts," because the Socialists knew that their ultimate aim would be strenuously opposed by the Liberals, and the Liberals knew that an attempt was being made to use them as a cat's-paw; but there seemed to be no reason why the two groups should not observe towards each other a benevolent neutrality, and march side by side as far as the half-way house, where they could consider the conditions of the further advance.

When I first became acquainted with the Russian Social Democrats, I imagined that their plan of campaign was of a purely pacific character; and that they were, unlike their predecessors, an evolutionary, as distinguished from a revolutionary, party. Subsequently I discovered that this conception was not quite accurate. In ordinary quiet times they used merely pacific methods, and they felt that the Proletariat was not yet sufficiently prepared, intellectually and politically, to assume the great responsibilities reserved for it in the future. Moreover, when the moment should come for getting rid of the Autocratic Power, they preferred a gradual process of liquidation to a sudden cataclysm. So far they might be said to be evolutionaries rather than revolutionaries, but their plan of campaign did not entirely exclude violence. They did not consider it their duty to oppose the use of violence on the part of the more impatient sections of the revolutionists, and they had no scruples about utilising disturbances for the attainment of their own ends. Public agitation, which is always likely in Russia to provoke violent repression by the authorities, they regarded as necessary for keeping alive and strengthening the spirit of

opposition; and when force was used by the police they approved of the agitators using force in return. To acts of terrorism, however, they were opposed on principle.

Who, then, were the Terrorists who assassinated so many great personages? In reply to this question I must introduce the reader to another group of the revolutionists who have usually been in hostile, rather than friendly, relations with the Social Democrats, and who call themselves the Socialist-Revolutionaries (*Sotsialisty-Revolutsionéry*).

Like other revolutionary groups, the Socialist-Revolutionaries declared their ultimate aim to be the transfer of political authority from the Autocratic Power to the people, and the complete reorganisation of the national life on the most advanced principles of Socialism. On certain points they were at one with the Social Democrats. They recognised, for example, that the social reorganisation must be preceded by a political revolution, that much preparatory work was necessary, and that attention should be directed first to the industrial proletariat as the most intelligent section of the masses. On the other hand they maintained, in opposition to the Social Democrats, that it was a mistake to confine the revolutionary activity to the working classes of the towns, who were not strong enough to overturn the Autocratic Power. The agitation ought, therefore, to be extended to the peasantry, who were quite "developed" enough to understand at least the idea of land-nationalisation; and for the carrying out of this part of the programme a special organisation was created.

With so many opinions in common it seemed at one moment as if the Social Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries might unite their forces for a combined attack on the Government; but, apart from the mutual jealousy and hatred which so often characterise revolutionary as well as religious sects, they were prevented from coalescing, or even cordially co-operating, by profound differences both in doctrine and in method.

The Social Democrats were essentially doctrinaires. Thorough-going disciples of Karl Marx, they believed in the so-called immutable laws of social progress, according to which the Socialistic ideal can be reached only through

capitalism, while the intermediate political revolution, which is to substitute the will of the people for the Autocratic Power, must be effected by the conversion and organisation of the industrial proletariat. With the spiritual pride of men who feel themselves to be the incarnations or avatars of immutable law, they were inclined to look down with something very like contempt on mere empirics who were ignorant of scientific principles and were guided by considerations of practical expediency. The Socialist-Revolutionaries seemed to them to be empirics of this kind because they rejected the tenets, or at least denied the infallibility, of the Marx school, clung to the idea of partially resisting the overwhelming influence of capitalism in Russia, hoped that the peasantry would play an important part in bringing about the political revolution, and were profoundly convinced that the advent of political liberty might be greatly accelerated by the use of terrorism. On this last point they stated their views very frankly in a pamphlet which they published in 1902 under the title of "Our Task" (*Nasha Zadatcha*). It is there said:

"One of the powerful means of struggle, dictated by our revolutionary past and present, is political Terrorism, consisting of the annihilation of the most injurious and influential personages of Russian autocracy. . . . Systematic Terrorism, in conjunction with other forms of open mass-struggle (industrial riots and agrarian risings, demonstrations, etc.) which receive from Terrorism an enormous, decisive significance, will lead to the disorganisation of the enemy. Terrorist activity will cease only with the victory over autocracy and the complete attainment of political liberty. Besides its chief significance as a means of disorganising, Terrorist activity will serve at the same time as a means of propaganda and agitation, a form of open struggle taking place before the eyes of the whole people, undermining the prestige of Government authority, and calling into life new revolutionary forces, while the oral and literary propaganda is being continued without interruption. Lastly, the Terrorist activity serves for the whole secret revolutionary party as a means of self-defence and of protecting the organisation against the injurious elements of spies and treachery."

In accordance with this theory a "militant organisation" (*Boevaya Organisatsia*) was formed, and it soon set to work with revolvers and bombs. First an attempt was made on

the life of Pobêdonostsev; then the Minister of the Interior, Sipiágin, was assassinated; next, attempts were made on the lives of the Governors of Vilna and Kharkov; thereafter the Governor of Ufa, the Vice-Governor of Elizabetpol, M. Plehve, the Grand Duke Serge, and many others fell victims to the Terrorist policy.

Though the Social Democrats had no sentimental squeamishness about bloodshed, they objected to this policy on the ground that acts of Terrorism were unnecessary and were apt to prove injurious rather than beneficial to the Revolutionist cause. One of the main objects of every intelligent revolutionary party should be to awaken all classes from their habitual apathy and induce them to take an active part in the political movement; but Terrorism must have a contrary effect by suggesting that political freedom is to be attained, not by the steady pressure and persevering co-operation of the people, but by startling, sensational acts of individual heroism.

The efforts of these two Revolutionary parties, as well as of minor groups, to get hold of the industrial proletariat did not escape the notice of the authorities; and during the labour troubles of 1896, on the suggestion of M. Witte, the Government had considered the question as to what should be done to counteract the influence of the agitators. On that question it had no difficulty in coming to a decision: the condition of the working classes must be improved. An expert official was accordingly instructed to write a report on what had already been done in that direction. In this report it was shown that the Government had long been thinking about the subject. Not to speak of a still-born law about a ten hours' day for artisans, dating from the time of Catherine II., an Imperial commission had been appointed as early as 1859, but nothing practical came of its deliberations until 1882, when legislative measures were taken for the protection of women and children in factories. A little later (1886) other grievances were dealt with and partly removed by regulating contracts of hire, providing that the money derived from deductions and fines should not be appropriated by the employers, and creating a staff of factory inspectors who should take care that the benevolent inten-

tions of the Government were duly carried out. Having reviewed all these official efforts in 1896, the Government passed in the following year a law prohibiting night work and limiting the working day to eleven and a half hours.

This did not satisfy the workmen. Their wages were still low, and it was difficult to get them increased because strikes and all forms of association were still, as they had always been, criminal offences. On this point the Government remained firm so far as the law was concerned, but it gradually made practical concessions by allowing the workmen to combine for certain purposes. In 1898, for example, in Kharkov, the Engineers' Mutual Aid Society was sanctioned, and thereafter it became customary to allow the workmen to elect delegates for the discussion of their grievances with the employers and inspectors.

Finding that these concessions did not check the growing influence of the Social Democratic agitators among the operatives, the Government resolved to go a step farther; it would organise the workers on purely trade-unionist lines, and would thereby combat the Social Democrats, who always advised the strikers to mix up political demands with their material grievances. The project seemed to have a good prospect of success, because there were many workmen, especially of the older generation, who did not at all like the mixing up of politics, which so often led to arrest, imprisonment and exile, with the practical concerns of everyday life.

The first attempt of the kind was made in Moscow, under the direction of a certain Zubátov, chief of the secret police, who had been himself a revolutionary in his youth, and afterwards an *agent provocateur*. He organised a large workmen's association, with reading-rooms, lectures, discussions and other attractions, and sought to convince the members that they should turn a deaf ear to the Social Democratic agents, and look only to the Government for the improvement of their condition. In order to gain their sympathy and confidence, he instructed his subordinates to take the side of the workmen in all labour disputes, while he himself brought official pressure to bear on the employers. By this means he made a considerable number of converts,

and for a time the association seemed to prosper, but he did not possess the extraordinary ability and tact required to play the complicated game successfully, and he committed the fatal mistake of using the office-bearers of the association as detectives for the discovery of the "ill-intentioned." This tactical error had its natural consequences. As soon as the workmen perceived that their professed benefactors were police spies, who did not obtain for them any real improvement of their condition, the popularity of the association rapidly declined. At the same time, the factory owners complained to the Minister of Finance that the police, who ought to be guardians of public order, and who had accused the factory inspectors of stirring up discontent in the labouring population, were themselves creating troubles by inciting the workmen to make inordinate demands. The Minister of Finance at the moment was M. Witte, and the Minister of Interior, responsible for the acts of the police, was M. Plehve, and between these two official dignitaries, who were already in very strained relations, Zubátov's activity formed a new bone of contention. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the very risky experiment came to an untimely end.

In St. Petersburg a similar experiment was made, and it ended much more tragically, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE JAPANESE WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

THE revolutionary movement entered on a new and more acute phase at the beginning of 1904, when the Russian Government inadvertently drifted into war with Japan. For all classes of the population the war came as a surprise. Whilst the Japanese were straining every nerve to equip themselves for the great struggle, the Russian public took very little interest in the Far Eastern Question. In what was taking place there seemed to be nothing abnormal: Russia was expanding, and would continue to expand, eastwards without any strenuous effort on her part. Of course the English would endeavour, as usual, to arrest her progress by diplomatic notes, but their efforts would be as futile as they had been on all previous occasions. Possibly they might incite the Japanese to active resistance, but Japan would not commit the insane folly of challenging her giant rival to mortal combat. The whole question would doubtless be settled in accordance with Russian interests, as so many questions of the same kind had been settled in the past, by a little skilful diplomacy; and Manchuria would be absorbed, as the contiguous Chinese provinces had been forty years before, without the necessity of going to war.

When these comforting illusions were suddenly dispelled in February, 1904, by the rupture of diplomatic relations and the Japanese naval attack upon Port Arthur, there was an outburst of indignant astonishment. At first the indignation was directed against Japan and England, but it was soon turned against the home Government, which had made no adequate preparations for the struggle, and it was intensified by current rumours about the crisis having been provoked by certain influential personages for purely selfish reasons.

How far the disorders in the military organisation and

the rumours about financial speculations in high quarters were true, we need not inquire. True or false, they helped greatly to make the war unpopular, and to stimulate the widespread desire for a more enlightened and liberal regime under which such abuses would be impossible. As in the time of the Crimean War, public opinion considered that Autocracy was on its trial and was once more found wanting.

Since the memorable outburst of Liberal enthusiasm which followed the Crimean campaign, and helped to bring about the emancipation of the serfs, the reorganisation of the tribunals, and the introduction of local self-government, the educated classes had constantly clung to the hope of inducing the Autocratic Power to cede to them a portion of its authority. During the reign of Alexander III. (1881-94), the son and successor of the Tsar-Emancipator, this hope rarely found public expression, because the Emperor was a vigorous ruler who believed in the principle of Autocracy as he believed in the dogmas of his Church, and the men with Liberal aspirations knew that any political demonstrations on their part would only confirm him in his reactionary tendencies. Prudently, therefore, they awaited better times, and the better times were supposed to have dawned when Nicholas II. ascended the throne in November, 1894; but all illusions of that kind were speedily dispelled. Before he had been three months on the throne the young sovereign announced to a large number of deputies from the Noblesse, the Zemstvo, and the municipalities, that people must not let themselves be carried away by absurd dreams of Zemstvo representatives taking part in the Government: "Devoting all my efforts to the prosperity of the nation, I will preserve the principles of Autocracy as firmly and unswervingly as my late father of imperishable memory."

These words, pronounced by the young ruler at the beginning of his reign, caused profound disappointment in all sections of the educated classes, and from that moment the *frondeur* spirit began to show itself openly. In the case of some people of good social position it took the unusual form of speaking disrespectfully of His Majesty in private; but more generally it was supposed that the Emperor had simply repeated words prepared for him by his Ministers,

and this idea spread rapidly till hostility to the bureaucracy became universal. The feeling was intensified in 1902, when the Ministry of the Interior was confided to M. Plehve. His appointment coincided with a revival of Terrorism, and he believed seriously that Autocracy was in danger. To save it, the only means was, in his opinion, a vigorous, repressive police administration, and as he was a man of strong convictions and exceptional energy, he screwed up his system of police supervision to the sticking-point, and applied it to the Liberals as well as to the Terrorists. In 1903, if we may credit information from an apparently trustworthy source, no fewer than 1,988 political affairs were initiated by the police and 4,867 persons were condemned to imprisonment or exile without any regular trial.

During the first five months of the war this unpopular rigorism was in full force, and public opinion was reserved in its utterances, but when M. Plehve was assassinated by a Terrorist (July 28th, 1904), and was succeeded by Prince Sviatopolk Mirski, a humane man of Liberal views, the Constitutionalists considered that the time had come for putting forward publicly their grievances and demands and thereby bringing pressure to bear on the Emperor. First appeared the leading members of the Zemstvos. After some preliminary consultation, they assembled at St. Petersburg, with the consent of the authorities, in the hope that they would be allowed to discuss publicly the political wants of the country and prepare the draft of a Constitution. Their wishes were only partially acceded to. They were informed semi-officially that their meetings must be private, but that they might send their resolutions to the Ministry of the Interior for transmission to His Majesty. A memorandum embodying the current Liberal views was accordingly drawn up and signed by 102 out of the 104 representatives present.

This hesitating attitude on the part of the Government encouraged other sections of the educated classes to give expression to their long pent-up political aspirations. On the heels of the Zemstvo delegates appeared the barristers, who discussed the existing evils from the judicial point of view, and prescribed what they considered the necessary remedies. Then came corporations of various kinds,

academic leagues, medical faculties, learned societies, nondescript, self-constituted associations, and miscellaneous gatherings, all demanding important reforms. Occasionally the conferences took the form of banquets, at which the patriotic speeches were not always couched in the respectful tone of ordinary times, and sometimes the efforts of the police to prevent meetings likely to become disorderly resulted in street demonstrations, in which the students took part. From the capital the movement spread to the provinces. In December (1904) the Town Councils of Moscow and other large towns began to support the Zemstvo, and the Zemstvo assemblies proceeded to support their representatives in St. Petersburg.

In the memorandum presented to the Minister of the Interior by the Zemstvo Congress, and in the resolutions passed at the other meetings, we see reflected the grievances and aspirations of the great majority of the educated classes. The theory propounded in these documents is that a lawless, arbitrary bureaucracy, desirous of excluding the people from all participation in the management of public affairs, had come between the nation and the supreme power, and that it was necessary to eliminate at once this baneful intermediary in order to inaugurate the so-called "reign of law." For this purpose the orators and petitioners demanded:

(1) Inviolability of person and domicile, so that no one should be troubled by the police without a warrant from an independent magistrate and no one punished without a regular trial.

(2) Freedom of conscience, of speech, and of the Press, together with the right of holding public meetings and forming associations.

(3) Greater freedom and increased activity of the local self-government, rural and municipal.

(4) An Assembly of freely elected representatives, who should participate in legislation and control the administration in all its branches.

(5) The immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly to prepare a Constitution on those lines.

Of these requirements, the last two were considered by far the most important. The educated classes had, in fact,

become animated with an ardent desire for genuine parliamentary institutions on a broad, democratic basis, and neither improvements in the bureaucratic organisation nor even an Assembly with merely consultative powers would satisfy them. They imagined that with a full-fledged Constitution they would be guaranteed not only against administrative oppression, but even against military reverses such as they were experiencing in the Far East—an opinion which will hardly be endorsed by those who know by experience how military unreadiness and inefficiency can be combined with parliamentary institutions.

For a whole month the Government took no official notice of the unprecedented excitement and demonstrations; then, on December 25th, it issued an Imperial ukaz to the Senate which was evidently intended as a reply to the Zemstvo Congress. His Majesty therein distinguished the real requirements of the people from the vague aspirations of certain individuals, enumerated a considerable number of reforms which he considered to be the most urgent, and instructed the Committee of Ministers to prepare at once the requisite legislation. The list of reforms coincided to a certain extent with the demands formulated by the Zemstvos, but the document as a whole was very far from giving satisfaction to the public, because it contained no mention of a National Assembly. Considerable reforms were to be undertaken, but they were to be effected by the unimpaired Autocratic Power in the old bureaucratic fashion, without the co-operation of the unofficial world.

Any doubts which may have been entertained as to the meaning of this ukaz were dispelled two days afterwards by an official communication. The Government therein reproached the leaders of the Zemstvo movement with "trying to bring confusion into the life of society and of the state," and reminded them that their efforts had resulted in a series of noisy conferences which had put forward inadmissible demands and in street demonstrations accompanied with open resistance to the authorities. Such things were declared to be "alien to the Russian people, which remained true to the ancient principles of the Imperial order of things, though an attempt was being made to give the disturbances

the unwarranted significance of a national movement. . . . Blinded by delusive fancies, the leaders did not perceive that they were working not for their country, but for its enemies." Conferences of an anti-national kind would no longer be permitted, and the Zemstvos and town councils were warned that they must return to their proper occupations, and confine themselves to the questions which they had a legal right to discuss.

As might have been foreseen, the ukaz and the official communication had not at all the desired effect of "introducing the necessary tranquillity into public life, lately diverted from its normal course." On the contrary, they increased the excitement and evoked a new series of public demonstrations. Heedless of the Ministerial warnings, the Zemstvo of Moscow expressed the conviction that the day was near when the bureaucratic regime, which had so long estranged the supreme power from the people, would be changed, and when freely elected representatives of the people would take part in legislation. In St. Petersburg, the same evening, at a great Liberal banquet, a resolution was voted condemning the war and declaring that Russia could be extricated from her difficulties only by the representatives of the nation freely elected by universal, secret suffrage. Similar resolutions were passed in various provincial assemblies of the Noblesse, and in some places even the fair sex considered it necessary to support the opposition movement. The matrons of Moscow, for example, in a humble petition to the Empress, declared that they could not continue to bring up their children properly in the existing state of unconstitutional lawlessness, and their view was endorsed in several provincial towns by the schoolboys, who marched in procession through the streets and refused to learn their lessons until popular liberties had been granted by the Government.

The apprehensions of the Government that the political agitation might lead to serious disturbances and bloodshed were speedily realised in a very terrible form. I refer to the so-called "Red Sunday" in St. Petersburg (January 22nd, 1905), when Father Gapon attempted to lead a monster procession of working-men, with their wives and children,

to the Winter Palace, and caused the loss of many lives. As this incident exercised a considerable influence on the subsequent course of the revolutionary movement, and attracted great attention in Western Europe, I propose to deal with it rather fully.

In the preceding chapter I have explained how the Social Democratic agitators always advised the workmen, in times of strike, to mix up political demands with their material grievances; how the Government, with a view to counteracting the influence of these agitators, gave its assent to a scheme for organising the workmen of the large towns on purely trade-unionist lines; and how an attempt had been made in Moscow to carry out this idea on a large scale.

A little later a similar attempt had been made in St. Petersburg, with the assistance of Father Gapon, a young priest who had taken part in the unsuccessful Moscow experiment, and had subsequently been appointed chaplain to a central convict prison in the capital. Here his new professional duties did not prevent him from continuing to take a keen interest in the welfare of the working classes, and in the summer of 1904 he became, with the approval of the police authorities, president of a great Labour Union called the Society of Russian Workmen, which had eleven sections in the various industrial quarters of the town and contained 25,000 members. Under his guidance the new experiment proceeded for some months very successfully. He gained the sympathy and confidence of the workmen, and, so long as no serious question arose, he kept his hold on them; but a storm was brewing, and he proved unequal to the occasion.

In the first days of 1905, when the economic consequences of the war had come to be keenly felt, and the men with Liberal aspirations were agitating publicly against the Government, a spirit of unrest and discontent appeared among the labouring population of St. Petersburg. On January 15th, exactly a week before the famous "Red Sunday," a strike began in the Putilov ironworks, and spread like wildfire to the other big works in the neighbourhood, so that on the second day 45,000 operatives had struck work. The immediate cause of the disturbance was

the dismissal of some workmen, and a demand on the part of the Labour Union that they should be reinstated. In the negotiations between employers and employed, Gapon tried hard to restrict the discussions to the simple points at issue, but the Social Democratic agitators, who intervened as advisers to the workmen, prevented an amicable arrangement by putting forward demands of a semi-political kind. The struggle between the "Economists," who confined themselves to workmen's grievances, and the "Politicals," who tried to give the movement a political character, became more and more intense, and gradually the latter gained the upper hand. They had in each quarter a regular organisation, composed of an "organiser," who directed the campaign; three "material agitators," who declaimed at the large meetings; and several "visitors," who attended the small gatherings in the workmen's houses. Besides these there was a number of fully "indoctrinated" workmen, who had learned the art of making inflammatory political speeches.

The numerous reports of the "organisers" and their assistants to the central committee of the Social Democrats, written hurriedly during this eventful week, are extremely graphic and interesting. The writers declare that there is a frightful amount of work to be done and very few to do it. Their stock of pamphlets is exhausted, and they are hoarse from speech-making. In spite of their frantic efforts, the masses remain dreadfully "undeveloped." The men willingly assemble to hear the orations, listen to them attentively, express approval or dissent, and even put questions; but the great majority remain obstinately on the ground of their own immediate wants, such as increase of wages and protection against the brutality of foremen, and take little interest in more "serious" demands. The agitators, however, are equally persistent, and they make a few converts. To illustrate how conversions are made, the following incident is related: At one of the meetings the cry of "Stop the war!" is raised by a youthful agitator, and he loses his presence of mind when a voice is heard in the audience saying: "No, no! The little Japs (*Yaposhki*) must be beaten first!" Thereupon a more experienced

orator comes to the rescue, and a characteristic conversation takes place:

"Have we much land of our own, comrades?" asks the orator.

"Very much!" replies the crowd.

"Do we require Manchuria?"

"No! No! No!"

"Who pays for the war?"

"We do, of course."

"Are our brothers dying, and do their wives and children remain without a bit of bread?"

"So it is! So it is!" say many, with a doleful shake of the head.

Having succeeded so far, the orator tries to turn the popular indignation against the Tsar by explaining that he is to blame for all this misery and suffering; but a workman called Petrov, one of Gapon's devoted adherents, suddenly appears on the scene and maintains that for the suffering and misery the Tsar is not to blame, for he knows nothing about it. It is all the fault of his servants, the Tchinovniks!

By this device Petrov averts the seditious cry of "Down with Autocracy!" which the Social Democrats wished to make the watchword of the movement, but he leaves his strong position of "No politics," and he is standing, as we shall see presently, on a slippery incline.

During the next two days the activity of the leaders and the excitement of the masses increased. While the Gaponists spoke merely of local grievances and material wants, the Social Democrats incited their hearers to a political struggle, advising them to demand a Constituent Assembly, and explaining the necessity for all workmen to draw together and form a powerful political party. The haranguing went on from morning till night, and agitators drove about from one factory to another to keep the excitement at fever-heat. The police, usually most active on such occasions, did not put in an appearance. Prince Sviatopolk Mirski, the honest, well-intentioned Liberal Minister of the Interior, believing in the virtue of conciliation, could not make up his mind to use severe repressive measures, and allowed things to drift. Even the agitators were astonished

at this extraordinary inactivity. One of them, a few days afterwards, wrote in his report: "The police was paralysed. Gapon might easily have been arrested and the clubs surrounded. . . . In a word, decided measures might have been taken, but they were not."

Unimpeded by the police, the political propaganda made such rapid progress that before the end of the week a Social Democratic orator could write triumphantly: "In three days we have transformed the Gaponist assemblies into political meetings!" Wonderful to relate, Gapon himself was being carried away by the prevailing excitement! When he perceived that the idea of making the Government responsible for all the existing evils was becoming extremely popular, and that he was consequently losing his hold on the masses, his inordinate vanity was wounded, and he sought to recover his influence by partially adopting the programme of his opponents. He maintained, however, like his friend Petrov, that the real culprits were the Tchinovniks, who prevented the groans and prayers of the people from reaching the ears of the Tsar; and from this view of the situation he drew the practical conclusion that His Majesty must be at once fully informed and duly admonished through some direct, unofficial channel. But where could such a channel be found? On that point he showed no hesitation: he would himself undertake the mission of enlightening and admonishing the Emperor! Accompanied by a monster procession of workmen, he would go to the Winter Palace, demand an audience of the Emperor, and present to him a petition stating the workmen's grievances, and demanding political liberties as the only effectual remedy.

As soon as he had formed this resolution he drafted a petition in strong language, and endeavoured to ascertain whether he would obtain the requisite popular support. For this purpose he went to one of the numerous workmen's meetings that were being held in all the industrial quarters, and, after briefly explaining the nature of the proposed petition, he said: "Let us go on Sunday to the Palace and summon the Tsar, and let us tell him our wants; if he does not listen to us, we have no longer any need of him." The scheme appeared to be favourably received, and towards the

close of the proceedings, after Gapon had retired and the petition had been read aloud by one of his friends, a resolution was passed that if the Tsar did not come out at the demand of the people, strong measures should be taken. As to what kind of strong measures should be employed, there could be no possible doubt, for one of the orators explained: "We don't require a Tsar who is deaf to the woes of the people; we may perish ourselves, but we shall kill him! Swear that you will all come to the Palace on Sunday at twelve o'clock!" The audience raised their hands in token of assent.

Having assured himself that his scheme would be supported by the working classes, Gapon sought the alliance and co-operation of his opponents. To the Social Democrats, whom he had hitherto been combating, he wrote briefly as follows: "I have a hundred thousand workmen, and I shall go with them to the Palace to present a petition. If it is not granted, we shall make a revolution. Do you agree?"

The Social Democrats, greatly astonished at this sudden change of attitude on the part of their antagonist, did not at all relish his proposal, because their policy was not to present petitions, but to extort concessions, and they strongly objected to everything that might strengthen the hands of the Autocratic Power, which they wished to destroy. They consented, therefore, simply to discuss the matter. I proceed now to quote from their delegates' account of what took place at the conference:—

The company consisted of Gapon, two of his adherents and five Social Democrats. All sat round a table, and the conversation began. Gapon is a good-looking man, with dark complexion and thoughtful, sympathetic face. He is evidently very tired, and, like the other orators, he is hoarse. To the questions addressed to him he replies: "The masses are at present so electrified that you may lead them wherever you like. We shall go on Sunday to the palace and present a petition. If we are allowed to pass without hindrance, we shall march to the Palace Square and summon the Tsar from Tsárskoe Seló. We shall wait for him till the evening. When he arrives I shall go to him with a deputation, and in presenting to him the petition, I shall say: "Your Majesty! Things cannot go on like this; it is time to give the people liberty. (*Tak nelzyâ; porá dat' naródu*

svobódu)." If he consents we shall insist that he take an oath before the people. Only then shall we come away; and when we begin to work again it will only be for eight hours a day. If, on the contrary, we are prevented from entering the city, we shall request and beg, and if we are not allowed to pass, we shall force our way. In the Palace Square we shall find troops, and we shall entreat them to come over to our side. If they beat us we shall strike back. There may be sacrifices, but part of the troops will come over to us; and then, being ourselves strong in numbers, we shall make a revolution. We shall construct barricades, pillage the armourers' shops, break open the prisons, and seize the telephones and telegraphs. The Socialist Revolutionaries have promised us bombs and the Democrats money, and we shall be victorious."*

Such were the ideas which Gapon expounded at considerable length. The impression he made on us was that he did not clearly realise where he was going. Acting with sincerity, he was ready to die; but he was convinced that the troops would not fire, and that the deputation would be received by the Emperor. He did not distinguish between different methods. Though not at all a partisan of violent means, he had become infuriated against autocracy and the Tsar, as was shown by his language when he said: "If that blockhead of a Tsar comes out (*Yesli êtot durák Tsar vuidet*). . . ." Burning with the desire to attain his object, he childishly imagined that a revolution could be accomplished in a day with empty hands!

Finding it impossible to dissuade Gapon from his purpose, the Social Democrats informed him that they would take advantage of the circumstances independently, and that if he was allowed to enter the city with his deputation, they would organise revolutionary meetings in the Palace Square.

The imperious tone used by Gapon at the public meetings and private conferences was adopted by him also in his letters to the Minister of the Interior and the Emperor. To the former he wrote:—

The workmen and inhabitants of St. Petersburg of various classes desire to see the Tsar at two o'clock on Sunday in the Winter Palace Square, in order to lay before him personally their needs and those of the whole Russian people. . . . Tell the Tsar that I and the workmen, many thousands in numbers, have peacefully, with confidence in him, but irrevocably resolved to proceed to the Winter Palace. Let him show his confidence by deeds, and not by manifestoes.

* This confirms the information which reached me from other sources that Gapon was already in friendly communication with other revolutionary groups.

To the Emperor himself his language was not more respectful:—

Sire! I fear the Ministers have not told you the truth about the situation. The whole people, trusting in you, has resolved to appear at the Winter Palace at two o'clock in the afternoon, in order to inform you of its needs. If you hesitate and do not appear before the people, then you sever the moral bonds between you and them. Trust in you will disappear, because innocent blood will be shed. Appear to-morrow before your people and receive in a courageous spirit our address of devotion! I and the representatives of labour, my brave comrades, guarantee the inviolability of your person.

Gapon was no longer merely the president of the Workmen's Union; inebriated with the excitement which he had done so much to create, he now imagined himself the representative of the oppressed Russian people and the heroic leader of a great political revolution. In the petition which he had prepared he said little about the specific grievances of the St. Petersburg workmen, and preferred to soar into much higher regions:—

The bureaucracy has brought the country to the verge of ruin, and, by a shameful war, is bringing it to its downfall. We have no voice in decreeing the heavy burdens imposed on us; we do not even know for whom or why this money is wrung from the impoverished population, and we do not know how it is expended. This state of things is contrary to the Divine laws, and renders life unbearable. Assembled before your palace, we plead for our salvation. Refuse not your aid; raise your people from the tomb, and give them the means of working out their own destiny. Rescue them from the intolerable yoke of officialdom; throw down the barrier which separates you from them, in order that they may rule with you the country which was created for their happiness—a happiness which is being wrenched from us, leaving us nothing but sorrow and humiliation.

The Emperor, who was in residence at Tsárskoe Seló, naturally declined the imperious summons to come to St. Petersburg, and he thereby avoided an unseemly altercation with the excited priest, as well as the boisterous public meetings which the Social Democrats would have held in the Palace Square. Orders were given to the police and the troops to prevent the crowds of workmen from penetrating into the centre of the city from the industrial

suburbs. The rest need not be described in detail. On Sunday morning many thousand workmen, accompanied by their wives and children, and heedless of the warnings of the officers commanding the Cossacks and infantry, tried to force their way to the Palace; the troops fired, and many of the demonstrators were killed or wounded. At one of the first volleys Father Gapon fell; but he turned out to be quite unhurt, and with the assistance of his revolutionary friends he escaped to Switzerland.

As soon as he had an opportunity of giving public expression to his feelings, he indulged in very violent language. In his letters and proclamations the Emperor is called a miscreant and an assassin, and is described as traitorous and bloodthirsty. To the Ministers he is equally uncomplimentary. They appear to him an accursed band of brigands, mamelukes, jackals, monsters. Against "the Tsar, with his reptilian brood," and the Ministers he vows vengeance: "Death to them all!" As for the means of realising his sacred mission, he recommends bombs, dynamite, wholesale terrorism, popular insurrection, paralysing the life of the cities by the destruction of the water-mains, the gas-pipes, the telegraphs and telephones, the railways and tramways, the Government buildings, and the prisons. At some moments he seems to imagine himself invested with papal powers, for he anathematises the soldiers who did their duty on the eventful day, whilst he blesses and absolves from their oath of allegiance those who help the nation to win liberty.

The brief remainder of Gapon's career did not redound to his credit and it ended tragically. Before the close of the year he had made his peace with the Government and had returned to St. Petersburg, where he entertained close relations, at one and the same time, with revolutionary conspirators and the Criminal Investigation Department, without gaining completely the confidence of either. According to his own statements, the cause of the revolution was still dearer to him than anything else, and nothing would ever induce him to divulge to the authorities the secrets of the revolutionary organisation; but he recognised that all attempts to overthrow the Government must be postponed

for some years, and he hoped to play, during this period of temporary tranquillity, the part of a well-intentioned mediator between the two hostile camps. As a man of vague ideas, unbridled imagination, and boundless vanity, he may perhaps have persuaded himself that his scheme was feasible and honourable, but for the ordinary observer who studies closely his words and his acts, it is difficult to distinguish his conduct at this time from that of a police informer, drawing considerable sums of money from the Government. Certainly the revolutionaries regarded him simply as a police spy, and one of their "militant organisations" punished him as such.

The circumstances may be related very briefly. On April 20th, 1906, when he had been a few months in St. Petersburg, he left suddenly for Ozerki, a small village in Finland near the Russian frontier, in the hope of being able to purchase from a noted terrorist, for the sum of £2,500, the secret of a conspiracy which had been formed against the life of the Emperor, and for two or three weeks nothing was heard of him by his friends. Then appeared in the St. Petersburg newspapers an anonymous communication, emanating evidently from a well-informed revolutionary source, to the effect that George Gapon had been tried by a workmen's secret tribunal, and had been found guilty of having acted as an *agent provocateur*, of having squandered the money of the workmen, and of having defiled the honour and memory of the comrades who fell on the "Red Sunday." In consequence of these acts, of which he was said to have made a full confession, the tribunal had condemned him to death, and the sentence had been duly carried out.

This mysterious announcement, which harmonised only too well with certain facts within the cognisance of the Criminal Investigation Department, induced the authorities to make a careful investigation in the neighbourhood of Ozerki; and there, in a lonely, unoccupied cottage, surrounded by pine woods, Gapon's body was found. The post-mortem examination showed that his hands had been tied tightly behind his back, and he had been strangled with a rope. There was strong reason to believe that the

act of vengeance had been perpetrated by the militant organisation of the Socialist Revolutionaries, but the party publicly denied the charge, and the members of the so-called Workmen's Tribunal remained, so far as I know, undiscovered.

M. Witte is reported to have said once to some workmen: "Gapon is a horse that I should not like to ride. I do not know whether he will carry you along the beaten track, or whether he will take the bit in his teeth, and make straight for the precipice. That will depend on his mood at a given moment." Whoever pronounced that judgment had gauged accurately Gapon's character.

The Red Sunday had a very great influence in fanning the public excitement all over the country, but its chief significance lay in the fact that it heralded the appearance of the industrial proletariat on the political stage. Hitherto the so-called Liberation Movement—that is to say, the agitation against the bureaucracy and autocracy—had been chiefly confined to the educated classes, whose aim was to obtain democratic parliamentary institutions; now the movement was reinforced, and was soon to be dominated, by the workmen of the factories and foundries, led by the secret committee of the Social Democrats, who aimed at replacing existing institutions by the Socialist Republic.

In view of this new danger the Government considered it necessary to adopt exceptional measures of precaution. The police throughout the Empire was placed under the orders of General Trepov, who had shown unusual energy in Moscow. Particular attention was directed to the factory workers who were all in an excited condition. The clubs which had been organised by Gapon for the purpose of preserving them from the revolutionary contagion were closed, and two commissions were successively appointed to consider labour questions; but in the existing strained relations between employers and employed no practical results could be obtained, and many of the unemployed were deported to their native villages. Strikes were frequent, especially in the southern and western provinces, where industry was highly developed and Social Democrats were numerous. All classes were eager to protest against the

old order of things, and strikes were the favourite form of protest. It was adopted not only by factory workers, artisans and private servants, but also by the organs of local self-government and public institutions. Several Zemstvos, declaring that serious work was impossible under existing conditions, demanded a national assembly and closed their sessions. The Universities and High Schools, in which professors and students were equally filled with reform enthusiasm, closed their doors, and the street demonstrations of the students and schoolboys led to conflicts with the police. In the outlying regions, where the administrative control was weak, the disorders were most serious. At Batum and Baku fighting took place between Tartars and Armenians; and in Georgia there was something like an armed rising. Even in the comparatively tranquil provinces the excitement spread from the towns to the rural districts, and the peasants demanded more land. Nor was the tragic element of terrorism wanting; attempts were made on the lives of officials, and on February 17th, 1905, the Grand Duke Serge, an uncle of the Emperor, was assassinated by a bomb-thrower in Moscow.

Meanwhile the Heads of Departments and the Council of Ministers were working day and night to carry out the urgent bureaucratic reforms ordered by the Emperor in his decree of December 25th, 1904. Only those who have seen the voluminous minutes of the Council meetings during those few weeks can form an adequate conception of the enormous amount of work done. Constitutionally and habitually indolent, the Russian bureaucrat resembles the giant of Russian mythology who dozes for many years, and rises suddenly to accomplish the most astounding feats of which no one deemed him capable. On this occasion the Tchinovniks produced a vast number of folios, in which the problems put before them were elucidated from the philosophical, historical and practical points of view, and the solutions recommended were supported by countless arguments, forcible and ingenious; but before the recommendations could be put into execution the Government shifted its ground in a very sudden and unexpected way.

On the morning of March 3rd, 1905, appeared a manifesto

which showed that the Government was still resolved to continue the policy of resistance which it had hitherto followed. In solemn, semi-ecclesiastical language the Emperor deplores the outbreak of internal disturbances at a moment when the glorious sons of Russia are fighting with self-sacrificing bravery, and offering up their lives for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland; but he draws consolation and hope from remembering that, with the help of the prayers of the Holy Orthodox Church, under the banner of the Tsar's autocratic might, Russia has frequently passed through great wars and internal troubles, and has always issued from them with fresh strength. He appeals, therefore, to all right-minded subjects, to whatever class they may belong, to join him in the great and sacred task of overcoming the stubborn foreign foe and eradicating revolt at home.

This patriotic pronouncement, containing no reference to internal reforms, produced in the Liberal world feelings of surprise, disappointment and dismay; and these feelings were in some measure shared by the Ministers, who knew nothing of the manifesto until they saw it in the *Official Gazette*. In the course of the forenoon some of them paid a visit to Tsárskoe Seló, and respectfully submitted to the Emperor that such a document must have a deplorable effect on public opinion. In consequence of their representations his Majesty consented to supplement the manifesto by a rescript to the Minister of the Interior in a very different style. He there explained that the Government, in carrying out his intentions for the welfare of the people, was to have the co-operation of "the experienced elements of the community." Then followed the memorable words:

> "I am resolved, henceforth, with the help of God, to convene the most worthy men, possessing the confidence of the people and elected by them, in order that they may participate in the preparation and consideration of legislative measures."

For the carrying out of this resolution a commission was to be at once convened under the presidency of M. Bulýghin, Minister of the Interior.

As a further concession to the popular demands the

Emperor issued simultaneously with the rescript an ukaz to the Senate, in which he announced that he considered it well to afford to his loyal subjects, zealously working for the common weal and the requirements of the State, the possibility of being heard by himself. For that purpose he imposed on the Council of Ministers under his own presidency,

> "The duty of examining and judging the views and proposals addressed to him by private persons and institutions, regarding questions connected with the improvement of the State organisation and the amelioration of the national welfare."

The invitation to send "views and proposals" for the consideration of the Government was utilised to continue the political agitation. The Bulýghin Commission was inundated with petitions and addresses, explaining the wants of the nation in general and of various sections of it in particular. Conferences and consultations were held by all sections of the community; members of the Zemstvos and town councils, lawyers, academicians, professors, school teachers, physicians, pharmaceutical chemists, office clerks and bookkeepers, railway servants and policemen. In these assemblies there was remarkable unanimity on the main points. What they all wanted for the country was a National Assembly elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage; and, for themselves individually, inviolability of person and domicile together with freedom of the Press and the right of organising associations and holding public meetings. Meanwhile, they formed "unions," and then created a "Union of Unions" to ensure greater unity of action. Even the higher ecclesiastical dignitaries woke up for a moment from their accustomed lethargy, remembered how they had lived for many years under the rod of M. Pobêdonostsev, recognised as uncanonical such subordination to a layman, and petitioned for the resuscitation of the Russian Patriarchate, which had been abolished by Peter the Great.

By this time the inordinate activity of the Heads of Departments and the Council of Ministers was beginning to bear fruit. In May a certain measure of religious freedom

was granted to the Old Ritualists, the Alien Confessions, and the Jews; and about the same time edicts were issued for the purpose of improving the condition of the peasantry. These reforms, admirable in themselves, did not at all calm the public excitement, because they dealt with matters in which public opinion for the moment took little interest. What the reformers were thinking about was not the disabilities of Old Ritualists, or the details of peasant life, but the necessity of replacing the effete, inefficient bureaucratic regime by parliamentary institutions. The Emperor had, as we have seen, declared his intention of summoning to the capital "the most worthy men" to share in the discussion of legislative proposals, but there was reason to suspect that he intended to create merely a consultative assembly, and consultative assemblies were no longer in favour even among the Moderates. The choice was now supposed to lie between a legislative and a constituent assembly. In plain language, the issue now was whether parliamentary institutions should be introduced into the existing form of government, or whether Autocracy, with its centralised bureaucratic machinery, should be thrown bodily into the melting-pot, and an entirely new system evolved by an assembly with unlimited powers, resembling the famous *Constituante* of the French Revolution. Thus reform *versus* revolution was the all-important question which was agitating the public mind, and there could be little doubt as to the direction in which public opinion was drifting.

Early in June, 1905, the revolutionary as opposed to the reform current was much strengthened by the news of the great naval disaster of Tsushima, in which the new Russian fleet, sent out to the Far East to recover the command of the sea, was completely destroyed, and all hopes of reversing the tide of war were finally shattered. At once a chorus of wild, patriotic indignation was heard all over the Empire. In the Lithuanian, Polish and southern provinces the disorders in the towns and the discontent in the rural districts increased; while in the Caucasus anarchy gained the upper hand. At Sebastopol military riots took place, a mutiny broke out on board the battleship *Prince Potomkin*, and the mutineers threatened to bombard the town. For

ten days this vessel cruised about under the red flag in the Black Sea, and finally surrendered to the Roumanian authorities in the port of Constanza. Everywhere there was a breakdown of authority.

The influence of these events was reflected in the discussions and resolutions of a new conference of Zemstvo Liberals and town councillors held at Moscow. In a strongly worded address to the Emperor, which might almost be called a remonstrance, it referred to "the criminal neglect and abuses" on the part of his advisers; to "the vices of a hateful and ruinous bureaucratic system"; to the non-fulfilment of promises given in manifestoes, and to the absolute need of summoning at once national representatives elected by universal suffrage. The address concluded thus:

"Do not delay, Sire! At this terrible hour of national trial, great is your responsibility before God and Russia!"

When the deputation for presenting this address was received by the Emperor on June 19th the leader, Prince Serge Trubetskoi, made a long speech, respectful in tone, but very strong in substance, and the Emperor made a short reply, in which he said:

"Cast aside your doubts; my will, the will of the Tsar, to call together representatives of the people is unchangeable. Their labours will be regularly applied to the work of the Empire. . . . Let the union of the Tsar and all Russia be established as of old. . . . I hope you will co-operate with me in the work."

This incident produced everywhere momentary rejoicing, because it was felt that at last the voice of the people had been heard in the palace of the Tsar; but very soon the dissensions began anew. The authorities were irritated by the publication of the address and of Prince Trubetskoi's speech; on the other hand, the Union of Unions was with difficulty restrained from passing a vote of censure on the deputation for its having been so moderate in its language.

Another congress of reformers, which met at Moscow on July 19, 1905, may be here mentioned, because it illustrates

the curious relations existing at that time between the reformers and the authorities, who disapproved of the so-called congress, conferences and consultations, but did not venture to use their customary repressive measures. The Moscow Congress was held in the spacious house of Prince Paul Dolgoroukov, and when the police appeared there was a moment of uncertainty and confusion; but tranquillity was immediately restored by the house proprietor. He said quietly to the deputies that the officials were merely discharging their regular duties, but as the congress had more important matters on hand it had better proceed with its deliberations. Thereupon the police inspector, with the *bonhomie* which is not unusual among Russian officials of all ranks, contented himself with drawing up a protocol, and remained in the hall as an interested spectator.

On August 19th, 1905, the Constitution, prepared by the Minister of the Interior and revised by the Council of Ministers, was published in the form of an Imperial decree. In the accompanying manifesto the Emperor indicated clearly the essential character of the new institutions. The time had come, he said, for summoning elected representatives from the whole of Russia to take a constant and active part in the preparation of laws. These deputies should constitute a special *consultative* body, entrusted with the preliminary elaboration and discussion of legislative measures, and the examination of the State Budget.

"For this reason, *while preserving the fundamental law concerning the autocratic Power*, we have deemed it well to form a State Duma, and to approve regulations for the elections . . . so that it may be able to assemble not later than the middle of January, 1906."

This "Bulýghin Constitution," as it was called, was universally regarded as miserably insufficient, because it created merely a consultative Chamber, preserved intact the autocratic power, and made the Ministry responsible not to the Chamber, but to the Emperor. The Liberals, however, considered that it might be accepted as an instalment of the desired reforms, and used as a stepping-stone to the attainment of greater political rights. On the other hand, the

more revolutionary groups anathematised the whole project, and one of them passed a resolution that anyone showing himself satisfied with it should be declared a traitor to the cause of the people. At this point, therefore, the reformers and the revolutionaries began to part company. The latter took the lead in the attack on the Government, but among their political strategists there was a serious difference of opinion. Some of them were in favour of an armed insurrection, whilst others, recognising that the masses were unarmed and very imperfectly organised, recommended a general political strike. After prolonged discussions the latter idea prevailed.

As soon as this cardinal point was settled, the Social Democrats set to work with great energy, and they were very efficiently supported, not only by the workmen, but by some sections of the educated classes. In St. Petersburg the University and the higher Technical Schools decided "to throw open their doors for the requirements of the Revolution," and thousands of persons of both sexes took advantage of this opportunity for ventilating their grievances. Indignation meetings were held daily in the class-rooms by hastily formed "unions," among which figured prominently the school teachers, the minor State officials, the dentists, the watchmakers and the railway servants. It was even proposed to hold a meeting of "the indoctrinated policemen"—that is to say, the policemen who had been taught to sympathise with the revolutionary movement. At these meetings the orators announced that a decisive conflict with Autocracy was inevitable, and sedulously preached the doctrine that the proletariat must oppose the party which demanded mere Liberal reforms. At the same time, numerous trained agitators were very active among the workmen, and induced many of them to strike. In some of the industrial suburbs the strikers, marching in procession through the streets and singing revolutionary songs, visited the factories which were still working and compelled their hesitating comrades to come out.

At this critical moment what the revolutionaries chiefly required was a bold, capable leader, and such a leader suddenly appeared in the person of M. Khrustalév, a man

of remarkable ability, whose name was quite unknown to the general public. He conceived the idea of a central elective body which should formulate the vague aspirations of the proletariat, and direct its operations. In the course of a few days he realised this idea under the name of the Council of Labour Delegates, and issued in its name a proclamation calling on the workmen of all denominations to join in a Pan-Russian general strike. The call was largely responded to, both in St. Petersburg and in the provinces, and the council's efforts were greatly aided by a strike of railwaymen, which had just begun independently at Moscow, and which rapidly paralysed the whole railway system of the country. By this fortuitous coincidence the army of strikers was reinforced by a contingent of 750,000 men, and the authorities were terribly embarrassed by the interruption in the ordinary means of communication—an embarrassment which was soon increased by a strike in the telegraph department. In St. Petersburg the strike reached its zenith on October 29th, when nearly all the shops remained closed, the tramways were stopped, the cabs disappeared from the streets, the supply of electricity was cut off, the water supply was threatened, and the inhabitants were trying to lay in a supply of food as if the city were about to undergo a siege.

Whilst these menacing preparations were being made by the revolutionaries, the Government remained so inactive that it was commonly supposed to be panic-stricken. In reality it was halting between two opinions—between further conciliation and vigorous repression. Most of the Tsar's advisers were in favour of the latter course, and already troops were being concentrated in and around the capital; but this view was strenuously opposed by M. Witte, who was now becoming the most influential member of the Government. He had just returned from America, where he had brought to a successful termination the peace negotiations with Japan; and, as a reward for his diplomatic services, the title of Count was conferred on him by the Emperor. A strong man, fruitful in resource and courageous in action, he seemed to many people the only official person capable of dealing with the complicated and dangerous

situation. His defects as a statesman had not yet become apparent.

Judging by his conduct as President of the Council during the next few months, we must suppose that Count Witte had the laudable ambition to play the part of a Russian Mirabeau. Endowed by nature with inordinate self-confidence, which had been confirmed and intensified by his brilliant official career, he imagined that, without having recourse to the repressive measures recommended by his more prudent colleagues, he could "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm." In plain language, he believed that he could satisfy the popular aspirations by liberal concessions and promises, and at the same time restrain and guide the extreme parties by dexterous diplomacy and powerful arguments. The Emperor hesitated to adopt his programme, on the ground that the announcement of radical reforms, which could not be immediately realised, would tend, in the actual condition of the public mind, to increase rather than calm the excitement; but Count Witte clung obstinately to his optimistic convictions, and, having prepared a manifesto and an explanatory memorandum in accordance with his scheme, he made the immediate publication of these two documents the condition of his remaining in office.

After some vain attempts to introduce modifications into the text, the two documents were published on the evening of October 30th, 1905. In the manifesto the Emperor declared that the Ministers, while providing for the restoration of order, and for the security of peaceful citizens, were instructed to carry out the following "inflexible resolutions":

(1) To confer on the population the immovable foundations of civil liberty, including inviolability of person, liberty of conscience and freedom of speech, together with the right of holding public meetings and forming associations.

(2) To include in the State Duma representatives of the unenfranchised classes.

(3) To lay down as an absolute rule that no law could be valid without the approval of the State Duma, and that the deputies should be able to take part in supervising the authorities so as to ensure their acting in conformity with the laws.

In the long explanatory memorandum which accompanied the manifesto, Count Witte gave his views on the situation and the means of improving it, as if he had been delivering a lecture to an academic audience. He considered that the excitement which had seized certain strata of Russian society was caused, not by the organised activity of the extreme parties (as was commonly assumed in the higher official circles), but by "a disturbance of the equilibrium between the intellectual tendencies of the educated classes and the outward forms of their life." In other words, Russia had outgrown the forms of her existing political organisation, and was seeking to obtain a new order of things on the basis of civil liberty. From these and similar considerations of an equally abstruse kind, the practical conclusion was drawn that the Government must at once confer upon the people such elementary civil liberties as inviolability of person and domicile, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, and the right to form associations and hold public meetings; thereafter it must guarantee the inalienability of the civil liberties conferred.

So far, Count Witte's aim evidently was to conciliate the reformers by convincing them that he understood their views and sympathised with their aspirations; and if he had stopped at this point he might have gained a great deal of momentary popularity. He considered it necessary, however, as a responsible statesman, to warn the impatient public that his benevolent intentions could not be immediately realised. The intended reforms naturally involved an enormous amount of legislative work, so that a certain space of time must elapse before the new laws could be imposed on the officials, and introduced into the manners and customs of the people. Moreover, the granting of the rights of civil liberty must be accompanied by legal limitations for the protection of the rights of third parties, and for the tranquillity and security of the State.

The simultaneous publication of the manifesto and the memorandum on the evening of October 30, 1905, produced in St. Petersburg a momentary enthusiasm, which found expression in noisy street demonstrations; but to those who examined carefully the two documents, neither of them

seemed wholly satisfactory. They contained no reference to an amnesty for political offences, which was universally desired at that moment, nor to the Constituent Assembly which was expected to establish the Democratic Republic. As for the promised reforms, they were not only miserably insufficient in themselves, but they were to be prepared by the hated bureaucracy, their introduction was to be a slow process extending over months or years, and they were to be limited by certain restrictions for the protection of so-called "third parties," and for the maintenance of public tranquillity. That was not the sort of liberty demanded by the people, and Count Witte's Liberal phrases did not protect him against the suspicion that he was an incarnation of bureaucracy like his avowedly Conservative colleagues. Still, on the whole, the publication of the two documents might be regarded as a victory, not only for the Liberals, but also for the revolutionaries. By the former, the promises could be accepted as a foretaste of better things to come; and by the latter, as a proof that with a little more effort the Government might be pushed over the precipice. In accordance with this conviction, a large number of young women spent the night in preparing red flags for the projected revolutionary demonstrations on the morrow.

As arranged, the triumphal processions, waving the red flags, and singing revolutionary songs, marched through the principal streets on the following day, but they did not evoke such harmonious enthusiasm as was expected. At several points they came into conflict not only with the police and the military, but also with counter-demonstrations, organised by the Conservative and Reactionary parties, who had hitherto remained so quiescent that their very existence was generally overlooked. In more than a hundred provincial towns similar conflicts took place, and the number of casualties has been estimated by one authority at 3,000 killed and 10,000 seriously wounded. As to the real nature and origin of this counter-revolutionary movement, authorities differ. Some represent it as a purely spontaneous expression of popular indignation against the disturbers of the peace, whilst others maintain that it was organised by a small group of Reactionaries, with the co-operation, or at least the

connivance, of the local authorities and the police. In support of this latter view some ugly facts were published at the time, and confirmed subsequently by a judicial inquiry. It was proved, for example, that in the police department in St. Petersburg, a large quantity of inflammatory proclamations were secretly printed by a subordinate official called Komissarov, who was repudiated by his superiors but never punished. Insinuations were made even against Count Witte, but he must certainly be absolved from all complicity, not only on the faith of his own indignant protestations, but also on the ground that the disturbances traversed his plans for pacifying the country by means of promises to all parties and good advice to everyone concerned.

In this reactionary outburst the most curious feature is that the popular indignation was vented chiefly on the peaceable Jewish population inhabiting the towns of the south-western and southern provinces. These poor people were pillaged and maltreated for several days to such an extent that in Western Europe their sufferings awakened a general feeling of commiseration, and the Russian word *pogróm* (devastation), by which the disorders were commonly designated, became for Englishmen a familiar term. Why the Israelites should have been chosen as the victims of reactionary fury, I have never heard satisfactorily explained. No doubt many of the young Jews, who felt keenly and resented bitterly the disabilities and restrictions to which their race was subjected, had thrown themselves with ardour into the Liberation movement, which held out the prospect of equality to all races and creeds. No doubt some of them had distinguished themselves not only in the political propaganda and agitation, but also in the acts of Terrorism.* In these circumstances we can understand how the Conservatives and Reactionaries should have become anti-Semites, and how some of the more fanatical and malicious among them should have harboured schemes of vengeance. It is difficult, however, to imagine how the Conservative or

* The late M. Plehve, when Minister of the Interior, assured me that of the political delinquents known to the police, more than 70 per cent. were Jews. He was thinking probably of the south-western and southern provinces at the time.

the Reactionary cause could be advanced by stirring up the hatred of the Russian lower classes against their Jewish fellow-citizens.

Perhaps a more plausible explanation is to be found in the theory that an anti-revolutionary demonstration was required for party purposes, and that the only means of producing even the semblance of such a thing was to stir up the latent hatred of the lower classes against the Jews. But this theory does not explain all the facts, for in some places—in Tomsk, for example—the victims were revolutionary rioters of purely Russian nationality.

Thus the manifesto and the memorandum, which Count Witte expected to act like oil on the troubled waters, had the directly opposite effect, and new disappointments awaited him. No sooner had the *pogróms* in the provincial towns ceased than a mutiny broke out (November 8th, 1905) among the sailors and soldiers in Cronstadt, and the disorders in Poland increased to such an extent that on November 13th that part of the Empire had to be placed under martial law. In the capital, too, the conciliatory Premier had new difficulties to contend with.

The St. Petersburg workmen, believing that the conciliatory attitude of the Government was due to the pressure which they had brought to bear on the authorities, were elated with their success, and impatient for further political action. In this exuberant frame of mind they proposed to try the effect of another general strike. In vain their Council of Labour Deputies, headed by Khrustalév, tried to persuade them that they ought to husband their meagre resources, and prepare for a decisive armed rising in the more distant future. The men were obstinate, and the Council, in order to preserve the semblance of control, was obliged to submit. It accordingly proclaimed a new general strike as a protest; firstly, against subjecting to a court martial the Cronstadt mutineers, "who had risen in defence of national freedom"; secondly, against capital punishment in general; and, thirdly, against the state of siege in Poland.

For a few days the proclamation was responded to with enthusiasm. Again the workmen paraded the streets of the industrial quarters, waving red flags and singing the

Russian *Marseillaise;* and again Count Witte tried to calm the excitement by friendly admonition. Addressing the workmen's delegates as "little brothers," he exhorted them, in consideration for their wives and children, to return to their work, and assured them that the Emperor had ordered his Ministers to direct special attention to the labour question: "Only give us time, and everything possible will be done for you." The workmen were not to be cajoled. In reply to the Premier's friendly message, the Council expressed its astonishment that "an Imperial favourite" should take the liberty of calling the St. Petersburg workmen his "little brothers," and it refused to follow his advice; but the arrogant tone which it thought fit to adopt was not justified by results. The strike did not become general, and at the end of five days it ingloriously collapsed.

By this time the men ought to have recognised that, as they had no strike fund, and their individual resources were exhausted, their best policy was to recuperate before beginning a new struggle; but they were anxious to obtain something tangible for their past sacrifices, and they imagined that they might, without striking, obtain the eight-hours working day, which the Social Democrats had taught them to regard as an essential article of the labour programme. For this purpose they adopted a peculiar procedure which had come into fashion in those stormy days, and for which a new legal term, "seizure-right" (*zakhvatnoé pravo*) had been specially invented. As this new institution, which might more correctly be called a new form of illegality, is a characteristic feature of the time, and appears often in the current literature, I may devote a few lines to the subject.

Seizure-right consisted simply in forcibly taking possession of what was desired, in the hope that the act of violence would be tacitly accepted as a *fait accompli* by all persons concerned, and would consequently remain unchallenged and unpunished. The Council of Labour Deputies repeatedly used this strange procedure with complete success. When it found difficulty, for example, in getting its party organ printed, it seized suddenly one night the printing office of a Conservative newspaper, cut off the employés from all con-

nection with the outer world, and compelled them, on pain of instant execution by revolver, to do what was required. In this way a number of the party organ was produced at the expense of the party's political opponents, and the authorities, with the timidity and apathy which characterised them at that period, refrained from instituting judicial proceedings.

In employing this new institution for the purpose of shortening the hours of labour, the workmen adapted the procedure to the circumstances of the case. As they encountered at first no active resistance, they used no violence or threats, and acted simply as if their demands had been conceded. Each day, as soon as they had worked for eight hours, they left the factory in a body, and when pay-day came round they insisted on obtaining the same wages as under the previous system. But here, to their disappointment, they discovered that they had reckoned without the host. Following the example of the workmen, the employers combined, and began to retaliate by a lock-out; and as the men had no resources to fall back upon they were very soon obliged to capitulate. Having thus become better acquainted with the real conditions of the labour problem, they showed themselves for some time much more conciliatory.

While the troubles were thus gradually subsiding in St. Petersburg, the revolutionary fever was breaking out with fresh violence in other parts of the Empire. During the month of November, 1905, alarming telegrams were received from many provincial towns. Everywhere the population seemed to be in a restless state, and disturbances were beginning among the peasantry. At Moscow the Committee of the Peasants' Union assembled to prepare a plan of campaign; in the Baltic Provinces the Lettish peasantry pillaged in wholesale fashion the estates of the landed proprietors, and established several provisional revolutionary Governments; in Grodno there was a strike of the police; at Sarátov, in the Governor's residence, General Sakharov was assassinated by a female Terrorist; everywhere the post and telegraph services were working irregularly. Worst of all, the Government could no longer be sure of the troops, for

the mutinous spirit which had appeared in Cronstadt was spreading to the farthest limits of the Empire. At Vladivostok the naval reserve pillaged and burnt many of the houses; at Irkutsk the local militia set fire to their barracks; the Kwantung fortress-artillery, returning from captivity in Japan, rose in mutiny and wounded several of their officers; at Kief a company of sappers mutinied; at Sebastopol a section of the fleet, under the command of a self-appointed officer, Lieutenant Schmidt, hoisted the red flag and fired upon the town, whilst a portion of the garrison arrested their officers, and were joined in their riotous proceedings by the dock labourers. All these disturbances and others of a less serious kind took place during a single month (November, 1905).

Evidently the area of disturbance was extending, and the revolutionary movement as a whole was undergoing a change. The industrial proletariat, directed by the Social Democrats, was no longer in the vanguard, and there was now no serious danger of the bureaucratic machine being thrown out of gear by another general strike. Experience had taught the workmen that the material benefits which they had chiefly at heart were not to be obtained by the methods which their educated teachers recommended; and these teachers felt that they were losing their hold on their pupils and on the masses. In these circumstances the Social Democratic Committee in St. Petersburg, though it had little or no hope of overthrowing the Government, determined to make a grand effort to recover something of its lost prestige. The field chosen for this exploit was Moscow, where there was still a considerable amount of excitement, and where there were very few troops. Here a Committee of Workmen's Delegates—a pale reflection of the arrogant Council of Labour Deputies in St. Petersburg—proclaimed a general strike and prepared an armed rising. Noisy public meetings and monster processions of the ordinary type were speedily followed by conflicts with the police and the troops, and the desultory street fighting lasted for nearly a week; but it was not of a very obstinate kind, and the barricades were of the most flimsy description. A couple of regiments, summoned hastily by the Governor-

General, sufficed to quell the revolt without any very great loss of life.

This closed for the moment the persistent efforts of the Social Democrats to destroy Autocracy by means of the industrial proletariat, but the revolutionary movement continued under another form. When the Social Democrats fell back to the rear, to reorganise their shattered forces and prepare new strategical plans of attack, their place was taken by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the exhausted industrial proletariat was replaced by the turbulent elements in the peasantry.

We have already seen* that the Socialist-Revolutionaries, in opposition to the Social Democrats, always maintained that the working classes of the towns were not strong enough to destroy the Autocratic Power, and that the peasantry ought to be called in as powerful allies in the work of destruction. As recent events seemed to confirm their views they now proceeded to put their principles into practice, and they found the soil well prepared for the experiment.

Ever since the Emancipation of the Serfs in 1861, when the proprietors were allowed to retain about the half of their estates, the peasantry had been expecting a general distribution of all the land among themselves†; and now, when they heard of the wonderful things that were taking place in St. Petersburg and other towns, they imagined that the happy moment had arrived. Very anxiously they made inquiries of everyone likely to have information on the subject; and from one source, at least, they received ample confirmation of their hopes. In many villages appeared educated young men of the student type, who explained to them that by right all the land belonged to them, but that in order to get possession of it they must expel the landed proprietors. This seemed to them an easy matter in the abnormal state of the country when the "seizure-right" was more or less in fashion among all classes; they had only to seize the land and resist obstinately all attempts to eject them until the *fait accompli* had created automatically a right of property. The young men

* *Vide supra*, p. 684.
† *Vide supra*, Chap. XXIX.

of student type who made such suggestions were, I need hardly say, the missionaries of the Socialist-Revolutionary party. Their propaganda was so successful that in the course of a few weeks violent agrarian disturbances swept like a hurricane over the fertile Black-Earth zone from the banks of the Volga, across the provinces of Sarátov, Tambóv, Kursk and Voronezh, far into Little Russia.

The movement assumed various forms according to local conditions. In certain localities where bad harvests had reduced the people to the brink of starvation the villagers came in a body to the proprietor and demanded merely that he should give them his store of grain. If he refused, they took it unceremoniously by force, and either distributed it amongst the households according to the size of the families, or carried it off in disorderly fashion according to their several means of transport, in which case the richer members of the Commune, who possessed several horses and carts, got the lion's share of the spoil. If the proprietor, from fear or other motives, offered no resistance, the raiders sometimes left him a quantity sufficient for his household wants, and occasionally even held out to him a prospect of receiving compensation from the Government, which usually made advances to the population in times of scarcity. This was the mildest form of procedure, and it seems to have been not very frequent. Generally the peasants wanted the land as well as the grain, and in the hope of getting rid of the proprietor permanently they took to pillaging and burning his house and farmsteadings, without inflicting in this part of the country any unnecessary personal violence. Much more savage and cruel were the proceedings in the Baltic Provinces, where a race antagonism had long existed between the Lettish peasants and the Teutonic landed proprietors, and where the movement had a more decidedly political character. There many acts of wanton destruction and cruelty were committed, and numerous attempts were made to establish a provincial revolutionary Government. An apparently well-informed authority stated that at one moment in a single province there were no less than twenty independent republics. However this may be, the Government considered it necessary to send into these provinces a

punitive expedition, which suppressed the disturbances with great severity.

In the southern region the unanimity which at first reigned among the peasants in their work of spoliation very soon disappeared, and they began to quarrel among themselves as to how the land should be disposed of. Gradually it became possible to distinguish in the chaos three vaguely defined groups which were designated by one investigator as the paupers, the well-to-do peasants, and the village aristocracy, differing from each other by the relative amount of means they possessed for the cultivation of the land. When this point had been reached, many of the village aristocrats were in danger of being despoiled as the proprietors had been. Finally the Government succeeded in restoring order, and then the agrarian movement assumed a new form—that of rural strikes for the purpose of compelling the landed proprietors to reduce the rent of land hired by the richer peasants, and to increase the wages of the agricultural labourers, who had little or no land of their own to cultivate.

During these widespread disorders and numerous troubles which filled up the winter months of 1905-6, Count Witte clung to his idea of restoring tranquillity by showing himself conciliatory to all the mutually hostile parties, which were united only in their hatred of the Government. To all of them he appealed pathetically that they should grant him time to realise as far as possible their demands and aspirations by means of definite legislative measures. All in vain! He was universally distrusted. The Conservatives and Reactionaries condemned him as a half-disguised Revolutionary seeking to gain popular favour for secret selfish designs of his own, and some of them suspected that at a critical moment he might throw off the mask and proclaim himself President of the Democratic Republic! On the other hand, not only the Revolutionaries, but even the Constitutional Reformers, regarded him as an incarnation of the bureaucratic spirit and a formidable obstacle to the introduction of all genuinely democratic institutions. History will decide how far the multifarious accusations brought against him were well founded, but meanwhile the impartial out-

sider, while recognising his grave defects as a statesman, cannot refrain from experiencing a feeling of commiseration in watching his energetic efforts to solve without bloodshed a fearfully complicated problem.

Some of his efforts to avert revolution may be noted in passing. Before the war, when Minister of Finance, Witte had endeavoured to improve the condition of the working classes by Factory Acts, and he had organised a great system of "consultations" with a view to improving the economic condition of the peasantry. During the acute period of the crisis he had induced the Emperor to grant a comprehensive amnesty for political offences and to relieve the peasantry from the burden of redemption payments for their land, and he had even attempted to form a non-bureaucratic Cabinet, including the more moderate leaders of the reform movement. But when mutinies broke out in the army and navy, when revolutionary organisations openly proclaimed their intention of overthrowing the Government, when street-fighting went on in Moscow for more than a week, and when a hurricane of agrarian disorders swept over the most fertile provinces, he was compelled reluctantly to adopt severely repressive measures. Courts martial had to be instituted to try the mutineers, martial law had to be proclaimed over a large part of the Empire, and some of the revolutionary organisations which openly defied the Government—such as the St. Petersburg Council of Labour Deputies, the Moscow Committee of Workmen's Delegates, which helped to construct barricades, and the Peasants' Union, which was fomenting the agrarian disturbances—had to be suppressed. Of the Labour Deputies who assembled daily in St. Petersburg under the eyes of the police, and who had recently reprimanded Count Witte for his audacity in addressing them affectionately as "little brothers," about two hundred were simultaneously arrested as they sat in council (December 16th, 1905). Such acts of rigour were urgently required because a large section of the population were coming to regard the Government as a "negligible quantity."

When Count Witte's efforts to conciliate public opinion by concessions and promises proved fruitless, the Reaction-

aries were not without hope that the Emperor might abandon his intention of convoking a Legislative Assembly and return to the old Autocratic regime; but in this they were disappointed. His Majesty persisted in the course which he had solemnly announced in the October manifesto, and on May 10th, 1906, the ceremony of opening the Imperial Duma took place in the Winter Palace.

A few days before that date Count Witte had ceased to be Prime Minister. Finding that he was not allowed a free hand by his Imperial master, he had repeatedly offered to resign, and finally, somewhat to his surprise, his resignation was accepted. For several reasons his retirement was not to be regretted. In his efforts to please everybody he had roused the suspicions of all and secured the sympathy and support of none, so that his continuance in office would have added to the difficulties inherent in the situation many bitter personal animosities. His post was conferred on M. Goremýkin, a capable, experienced official of moderate views, while the Minister of the Interior, M. Durnovó, who as an advocate of energetic repression was also unpopular, was replaced by M. Stolýpin, who had distinguished himself as a provincial governor, but was little known in the political world.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE IMPERIAL DUMA

THE first Duma, containing over four hundred members, reflected in some respects the contemporary state of Russia. Like the Empire, it was composed of many nationalities clustering round the dominant race. The chief ethnographical groups were the Great-Russians (265), the Little-Russians (62), the White-Russians (12), the Poles (51), the Lithuanians (10), the Letts (6), the Esthonians (4), the Germans (4), the Jews (13), the Tartars (8), and the Bashkirs (4); whilst the less important nationalities, each represented by one or two deputies, included the Mordvá, the Votiaks, the Tchuvash, the Circassians, and the Kalmyks. In respect of social status the diversity was equally remarkable. A spectator had only to glance at the costumes to perceive that the Assembly included the tamed nomad from the Steppe, the free Cossack, the unlettered peasant, the parish priest, the village schoolmaster, the unsophisticated landed proprietor, and some gentlemen who represented the latest products of West-European culture. With regard to political tendencies and aims, the Duma was likewise a fair reflection of the state of things in the Empire. In the old times, when a National Assembly was still a dream of the future, my Russian friends used to assure me that if they were ever fortunate enough to possess a parliament, it would contain no rival parties, because all the members would devote themselves exclusively to securing and advancing the national welfare; but this prediction, as I warned my friends at the time, was not destined to be realised. In the first Duma there were as many parties, or at least rival groups, as there are usually in the parliaments of other countries. First in numbers and importance came the 153 Constitutional Democrats, or Cadets as they are usually

called,* drawn from various sections of the educated classes—landed gentry, barristers, doctors, officials, professors, and literary men. Next came the Labour group of 107 members, drawn from lower social strata—the peasants, workmen, minor officials, school teachers, and the like. Apart from both of these were the Autonomists, 63 in number, representing the minor nationalities who objected to complete absorption in the great heterogeneous Empire, and the Independents, numbering 165, who hesitated to attach themselves to any party and were unable to form a party for themselves. As for the Conservatives and Reactionaries, they were so few that they hardly constituted a group, and they were so little in sympathy with the overwhelming majority of their colleagues that they rarely ventured to put forward their views.

If there was any truth in the current accusation that the authorities had exercised undue pressure on the electors, the pressure must have been singularly ineffectual, for the Chamber could not be called governmental in any sense of the term. On the contrary, it was not at all amenable to official influence, and its short, stormy life of seventy-two days was devoted almost entirely to a struggle with the Cabinet. Nearly all the groups of which it was composed were resolved to extort from the Autocratic Power a great deal more than had been granted by the manifestoes, the rescripts, the ukazes, and the fundamental laws; and when they encountered stubborn resistance from the Executive, they directed their energies to discrediting the Government, to advertising their own benevolent intentions towards the people, and to increasing the popular discontent.

Of the groups above enumerated, and others which might be mentioned, the only one which had the characteristics of an organised political party was that of the Cadets. Though it included only about one-third of the House, it had so many allies in other groups that it could generally count

* This curious term *Cadet* deserves a word of explanation. Most of the parties and groups gave themselves such long names that it became customary to designate them by their initials. Thus the Constitutional Democrats (*Konstitutsionniye Demokraty*) were designated by the letters K. D., which are pronounced in Russian *Ka Deh*, exactly like the French word *Cadet*.

on a majority in a division, and it directed the proceedings to such an extent that this first Assembly is often called the Cadet Duma to distinguish it from its successors.

In theory the Cadets were a moderate constitutional party, and if they had possessed a little more prudence and patience they might have led the country gradually into the paths of genuine constitutional government; but, like everyone in Russia at that time, they were in a hurry, and they greatly overestimated their own strength. Their impatience was curiously illustrated during a friendly conversation which I had one evening with a leader of the party. With all due deference, I ventured to suggest that, instead of maintaining an attitude of systematic and uncompromising hostility to the Ministry, the party might co-operate with the Government and thereby gradually create something like the English parliamentary system, for which they professed such admiration; possibly in eight or ten years this desirable result might be obtained. On hearing these last words my friend suddenly interrupted me and exclaimed:—

"Eight or ten years? We cannot wait so long as that!"

"Well," I replied, "you must know your own affairs best; but in England, which constitutionalists of other countries often take as their model, we had to wait for several centuries."

Suggestions of this kind were most unwelcome to the Cadets, for they were resolved to obtain at once a full-fledged Constitution. In granting a kind of parliament, the Emperor had defined and limited its functions by fundamental laws which could be modified only on the initiative of the Crown, and he had reserved to the Sovereign the appointment of Ministers and the control of the Executive. Thus the new Russian Constitution, if Constitution it could be called, was of the German rather than of the English type. Now, what the Cadets wanted—and with them the great majority of the educated classes—was a Constitution in which the Cabinet and the Administration should be responsible, not to the Emperor, but to the majority in the Duma; and they began at once their campaign for the attainment of this object, which was inconsistent with the fundamental laws just issued. Foreseeing clearly the probable consequences of this course,

they resolved, at a party conference, that they should seek to attain their ends, "undeterred by the possibility of an open rupture with the Government," and that the Government should be made to appear responsible for the conflict. That was the basis of their strategy, and they acted accordingly. In their reply to the speech from the Throne they carefully abstained from any expression of gratitude for rights and privileges conferred, and they enumerated clearly their demands: That no special laws should limit the Duma's legislative competence; that the Council of the Empire should be abolished; that the Ministry should be responsible to the Duma; and that the Administration should be thoroughly reorganised.

As soon as they were given to understand that these demands, being inconsistent with the fundamental laws, could not be complied with, efforts were made to induce the Ministers to resign in order that they might be replaced by a Cabinet formed from the majority of the Chamber, and these efforts were continued almost daily till the end of the session. Again and again the cry was raised: "Resign! Resign! It is time for you to retire!" Want of confidence, dissatisfaction, and even contempt were frequently and loudly expressed, and the Ministers were told, sometimes in insulting terms, that in their retirement alone was to be found the salvation of the Fatherland. Some of the more impatient deputies of the Labour group proposed to create at once an administrative organisation independent of the Government by means of local committees elected on the basis of manhood suffrage; and when their demands were disregarded, their declamations assumed a tone of menace: "We regard the Ministers as criminals; we hope that their disgraceful rule may be put an end to, and if that cannot be done by us, the people will settle accounts with them!" "Is it not time for all these rulers, great and small, to understand that the moment is perhaps not far distant when the Duma will find it impossible to protect them against the punishing hand of the enraged People?" "Surely the Government must perceive that a frightful wave of national indignation is rising, and that it may reach heights hitherto unknown!"

When violent language of this kind was used by the parties of the Left, the Cadets usually remained silent and they never once protested. They could wax eloquent over the atrocities instigated by the Reactionaries, but for revolutionary agitation and acts of terrorism they had no word of condemnation; they regarded, in fact, the parties of the Left as their allies, and hoped to use them as instruments for bringing pressure on the Government with a view to raising themselves to the Ministerial benches. Gradually this strategy came to be understood by the members of the Labour group, and their relations with the Cadets ceased to be cordial.

This struggle for power between the Government and the Cadets went on for two months without any tangible results, and at last the Cadets imprudently resolved to bring about a general, decisive engagement. The battlefield chosen was the Agrarian question, in which revolutionary proposals were sure to evoke the sympathy and support of the peasants. In the hope of counteracting the Agrarian movement for the forcible expulsion of the landed proprietors from their estates, the Government had issued on July 2nd an official communication to the effect that it regarded as inadmissible the compulsory alienation of landed property in favour of the peasants. This seemed to ordinary minds a natural and laudatory proceeding on the part of the Government, but the Cadets, who did not desire Agrarian tranquillity at that moment, denounced it as "not only imprudent, but as a criminal attempt on the part of the Executive to produce confusion in the minds of the population." In order to prevent this evil effect, they proposed to issue to the people a counterblast in the form of a communication of the Duma, "the highest legislative authority." The proposal was warmly supported by the orators of the Left, who spoke very plainly: "If the Duma," they said, "does not wish to be a dead institution like the bureaucracy, it must listen every day and every hour to the voice of the national will, and execute immediately the commands of the People. The demand for direct relations between the Duma and the People comes from all classes. . . . The slow, indirect method is no longer possible, now that at the head of the Administra-

tion remain authorities who have been declared by the voice of the People to be criminals, murderers, and executioners. From to-day onwards the People sees before it two contending powers: the power of the bureaucracy, and the power of the national representatives."

Not a few deputies, even in the ranks of the Cadets, had scruples about thus appealing to the People against the Government, but they refrained from offering strenuous opposition, and on July 19th, in a small House, the revolutionary proposal was carried by a majority of 124 to 53. At once the Government took up the challenge, and three days afterwards the Duma was dissolved.

This was a surprise for the Cadets. They believed that the Government would not dare to proceed to a dissolution, and that if it took such a step the whole population would rise in support of their representatives. In accordance with this belief, they went immediately to Finland and drew up at Viborg a seditious proclamation in which they called upon the people to assume an attitude of passive resistance to the authorities by refusing recruits and declining to pay taxes.

If the Cadets really hoped to produce a serious popular movement against the Government, they must have been greatly surprised and disappointed, for their proclamation, in publishers' phrase, "fell still-born from the Press." It was not obeyed even by its authors, for among those who had drawn up and signed it some went abroad a few days afterwards and showed no hesitation about paying the passport tax! Thus ended, not very heroically, what has been called "the Duma of the national indignation." It certainly expressed the anger of the nation against the Government in no measured terms, but it did little else. Having fulfilled this part of its mission, it might have settled down quietly to useful legislative work and co-operated with the Government in a series of practical reforms, but it had no taste for such prosaic occupation. No one was satisfied with the concessions made by the Emperor, and all were clamouring for more. The moderate groups were demanding a Cabinet chosen from, and responsible to, themselves; while the groups of the Left were aiming at the substitution of a Democratic Republic for the Autocratic regime.

In dissolving the first Duma the Emperor decided that another experiment should be made without any change in the electoral law, and a new Duma was accordingly convoked for March 5th, 1907.

There was some reason to suppose that the new Duma would be better than its predecessor: the public excitement had abated, and many illusions had been destroyed by experience. No one any longer imagined that Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and all the other evils from which Russia was suffering could be swept away by torrents of indignant rhetoric, and the ground be cleared for a beautiful new edifice, constructed according to the most modern and advanced principles of political architecture. Even the most doctrinaire of the Liberals or Socialists could hardly flatter themselves that the walls of the Imperial Jericho would fall spontaneously before the blast of democratic or revolutionary trumpets. The Government had shown that it possessed means of resistance, and now it had on its side a volunteer force drawn from the Conservative elements of the population, which had not been able to organise themselves for the first general election. Moreover, there was now a much stronger hand at the helm; for, at the moment of the dissolution, M. Stolýpin, the only member of the Cabinet who had succeeded in obtaining generally a respectful hearing in the Chamber, had replaced M. Goremýkin as Prime Minister; and he had now provided abundant occupation for such deputies as wished to undertake practical legislative work. Differing in this respect from his predecessor,* he had taken the precaution of preparing a big pile of bills, sufficient in quantity and quality to occupy fully for several years the energies of the most hard-working Parliament. There would be less excuse, therefore, for honourable members to waste time and create unnecessary friction by raising and discussing abstract constitutional questions.

All this gave reason to hope that the second Duma, which was about to assemble, would be less revolutionary and more capable of practical work than its predecessor; but

* In justice to M. Goremýkin I may mention that he was not to blame for appearing before the first Duma with empty hands, because he had been appointed Premier only about ten days before the opening of the Assembly.

these hopes were not destined to be realised. Though the political excitement had subsided in certain sections of the population, it was still so general that the fact of a candidate having been imprisoned or exiled was commonly regarded by the constituencies as a recommendation in his favour. Out of a total of 213 deputies elected in the twenty-five provinces for which I happen to possess statistics, no less than 55 had been in prison, in exile, or under police supervision, and 13 had been dismissed from the public service. Existing revolutionary groups were thereby strengthened, and they were reinforced by a new and powerful group—that of the Social Democrats, who had boycotted the first general election and had now gained more than sixty seats. The total of Socialist deputies was thus raised from 26 to 83—that is to say, from 5 to 17 per cent. of the whole House.

Another undesirable change had been produced by the general election: the intellectual level of the deputies as a body had been lowered. Among the Cadets who had signed the Viborg manifesto, not a few were men of exceptional ability and culture, and as they were being prosecuted on a charge of sedition they could not legally present themselves as candidates. Of the deputies who replaced them, the great majority were very far from being men of the same intellectual calibre, while the contingent of the totally uneducated was greatly reinforced. In contradistinction to "the Duma of the national indignation," the new Assembly could be described by a leading Conservative, without much exaggeration, as "the Duma of the national ignorance."

As soon as the formal business had been disposed of, the House began to show its real character. When M. Stolýpin had sketched in outline his legislative programme, and expressed his readiness to place at the disposal of the Duma his loyal intentions and accumulated experience, he was answered by the Extreme Left in anything but a conciliatory tone. The leader of the Social Democrats, a young Georgian from the Caucasus, speaking in a calm, deliberate style, declared that the Prime Minister's speech had been received in silence because no cries or stormy demonstrations could adequately express the feelings of the People towards a Government which had dispersed the first Duma, created

courts martial, fettered the country by a state of siege, imprisoned its best sons, ruined the population, and squandered the money intended for famine relief. As the Executive would never voluntarily submit to the legislative power, the orator considered that the organised strength of the Government must be opposed by the organised strength of the People. For this purpose the accusing voice of the People's representatives must resound through the country and rouse to the struggle all who were not yet awake; and the Duma must, by means of legislative measures, organise and combine the awakened masses. This revolutionary plan of campaign, recommended with the calm assurance of conscientious conviction as if it had been an ordinary legislative proposal, was supported with great warmth by less phlegmatic members of the party, and gave rise to a very lively discussion, in which the Extreme Right protested in violent language. M. Stolýpin, on the Ministerial bench, listened attentively in silence to the various orators, and finally closed the debate by a short speech, delivered with calm dignity, but not without occasional indications of suppressed emotion. After referring to the thinly disguised threats of the Social Democrats, he turned to the leader of the party, drew himself up to his full height, and concluded with a short declaration, in a firm, defiant tone:—

"These attacks are doubtless intended to paralyse the will and intellect of the Government; they are all tantamount to two words addressed to the constituted authority: 'Hands up!' To these two words the Government, completely self-possessed and conscious of its uprightness, can only reply: 'You do not frighten us!'"

During this significant discussion which foreshadowed the whole history of the second Duma (March 5th to June 16th) the Cadets remained silent, playing the part of *tertius gaudens*. They clung as firmly as ever to their aim of compelling the Government to grant parliamentary institutions in the English sense of the term, and they had still the ambition to form the first Cabinet in a parliament of that kind; but they recognised the necessity of changing their tactics, and one of them expressed this in a picturesque

way: "As the fortress cannot be taken by storm, it must be forced to capitulate by a prolonged siege." In one respect, however, their tactics remained the same: they encouraged the activity of the Extreme Left, in the hope that sooner or later the Government would be frightened by the revolutionary agitation and would accept as the lesser of two evils a Cadet Ministry. For this reason they could never be induced to support even an academic resolution condemning acts of terrorism, and persistently regarded all such proposals as traps laid by their rivals for the purpose of sowing discord between them and their revolutionary allies. The said allies, however, understood the game perfectly; whilst refraining from unnecessary conflicts with the Cadets, they regarded them as half-hearted politicians who, in the event of an armed rising, would view the proceedings at a safe distance and intervene merely to carry off the lion's share of the spoil. M. Stolýpin likewise understood the Cadets' game, and systematically rejected their advances; he had not forgotten the Viborg manifesto and all that it implied. Nor was he less cautious with regard to the avowed revolutionaries. He obstinately refused to swell the ranks of the agitators and terrorists by recommending a general amnesty for political offenders, and he declined to relax in any way his military precautions against an insurrection.

In such circumstances, with no moderate party strong enough to command a majority when important legislative questions were put to the vote, the Duma was incapable of any useful work; but nearly all the sections of which it was composed desired, for different reasons, to prolong its existence. By all parties it was regarded as a convenient instrument for ventilating their political opinions and aspirations, and as a means of keeping a door open for future possibilities; but there was one group which was too impatient to continue indefinitely a waiting policy. That was the group of the Social Democrats, who were convinced that their aims could be attained only by an armed rising, in which the army should pass over to the side of the masses, or at least remain neutral. To attain this object they had created a secret organisation with ramifications in the garrison towns all over the country and a central bureau in

St. Petersburg, where the conspirators assembled in the apartment of one of the deputies.

This revolutionary activity was carried on so openly that it very soon became known to the Government, and M. Stolýpin determined to put a stop to it. On June 14th he accordingly came down to the House, announced formally that fifty-five members of the Social Democratic group had been conspiring to seduce the army from its allegiance and bring about an insurrection, and demanded that the Duma should consent to judicial proceedings being taken against them. In explanation and support of his demand, he caused a lengthy indictment to be read by a high official of the Judicial Department, and he gave it clearly to be understood that the matter must be treated as urgent. This placed the Cadets in an extremely awkward position: if they consented to the demand of the Prime Minister, they practically abandoned their allies of the Extreme Left; and if they refused, they ran a very serious risk of provoking a dissolution, which they were most anxious, for many reasons, to avoid. In this difficulty they took refuge in procrastination, and caused the matter to be referred to a Committee, which was instructed to report within twenty-four hours; but at the end of that time no decision was forthcoming, and an attempt was made to secure further delay. To these Fabian tactics the Government replied next morning by a decree of dissolution.

Thus ended, one might almost say by suicide, the second Duma, after an inglorious existence of a little more than three months, during which it showed its incapacity for practical legislative work. As insinuations have been made in various quarters that the conspiracy which produced the crisis was an invention of the police, it may be well to mention an incident which effectually refutes that theory. When the Cadets proposed to refer the matter to a Commission, Tsereteli, leader of the Social Democrats, courageously declared that such a procedure was unnecessary, because the indictment was true from beginning to end (*ot slova do slova*), and the accused were proud of what they had done: "We who are accused of having undertaken the political education of the masses, declare that this

accusation fills our hearts with pride, and serves as a proof that we fulfilled honourably the obligations imposed on us."

As the Duma had thus twice shown its unfitness to fulfil the functions for which it had been created, the question was raised whether it should not be abolished, or at least radically transformed. Several members of the Cabinet answered this question in the affirmative. M. Stolýpin, on the contrary, urged that at least one more attempt should be made to lead the country gradually into the paths of constitutional life, and as a means of removing some of the worst evils he proposed certain modifications of the election law. In this course of action he was supported by the Emperor, who was likewise reluctant to return to the old system of Government; and the experiment was made with considerable success.

The change in the composition and spirit of the Assembly was evident at a glance. On returning home from one of the first sittings, I made the following entry in my diary, which indicates briefly the changes which had taken place and the prospects for the future:—

"*November 23rd*, 1907.—This third Duma, in which I have just spent three hours listening attentively to the debates, and conversing, during the intervals, with some of the more influential members, is evidently very different from its predecessors. What struck me immediately was that most of the members are better dressed and have altogether a more civilised appearance; I saw no unkempt Bohemians, and only a few peasants, none of whom were in peasant costume. If first impressions are to be trusted, this Assembly will not be known as 'the Duma of the national indignation,' nor as 'the Duma of the national ignorance.' Many of the peasants and village schoolmasters have been replaced by landed proprietors, and there are now, I am told, a few representatives of the big manufacturers, who were formerly conspicuous by their absence. The reactionary group has been greatly increased, whereas the avowedly revolutionary contingent has almost completely disappeared. Stolýpin seems to be, on the whole, satisfied with the result of the elections, but he prudently refrains from sanguine predictions.

"The change for the better may be attributed in some

measure to the new electoral law and the progress made by the Government in the art of electioneering, but it is mainly due, I believe, to a great change which has taken place in public opinion. Under the influence of time and experience, the revolutionary excitement is evaporating, and those who have something to lose have become alarmed by the activity and defiant attitude of the aggressive Socialists. Cosmopolitanism, too, which favoured the extravagant claims of the minor nationalities, has received a check, and there are significant symptoms that Russian nationalist feeling is being aroused. This is not surprising when we remember how, in the last Duma, deputies from the Caucasus, speaking Russian with a strong foreign accent, threatened the Government with an armed rising of the Russian people; how the Poles, while respecting scrupulously the rules of the House, held the balance for a time between the contending Russian parties; and how on one occasion an Armenian deputy allowed himself to cast an insult at the Russian army! The weak point in the present Assembly is that the Octobrists—the moderate party which accepts the famous October manifesto in its natural sense, and wishes to co-operate with the Government in legislative work—do not possess an absolute majority, and consequently they must ally themselves, permanently or intermittently, either with the Right or with the Cadets. Doubtless they would prefer the former as allies, but, unfortunately, the Right contains a large element of violent Reactionaries, who are more than suspected of a desire to wreck the parliamentary institutions and re-establish some sort of Autocracy under their own control. On the other hand, an alliance with the Cadets, who still cling to their old tactics of trying to extort further concessions from the Crown, would inevitably lead to a conflict with the Government and probably to another dissolution."

The general character and the conflicting currents of this Duma were reflected in the debates on the address (November 26th, 1907). The text recommended by the Octobrists was as follows:—

"Your Imperial Majesty was graciously pleased to welcome us, members of the third State Duma, and to invoke the blessing of the

Almighty on the legislative work which awaits us. We consider it our duty to express to your Imperial Majesty our feelings of devotion to the Supreme Leader of the Russian State, and our gratitude for the rights of national representation granted to Russia and confirmed by the fundamental laws of the Empire. Believe us, Sire, we shall apply all our strength, all our knowledge, all our experience, to strengthening the State organism, renewed in the manifesto of October 30 by your sovereign will; to tranquillising the Fatherland, maintaining order, developing public instruction, increasing the general welfare, confirming the greatness of indivisible Russia, and justifying thereby the confidence shown us by the Sovereign and the country."

This address, which the Octobrist leader recommended as containing nothing of a party character, gave rise to a very curious and characteristic debate. Objections were raised both by the Right and by the Cadets. The former insisted on the insertion of the word *Autocrat*, which still appears among the Emperor's titles; whilst the latter insisted on the insertion of the word "Constitution," which has never received official sanction. These apparently futile amendments had a certain practical significance. On the one hand the insertion of the word Autocrat would be a public recognition of the fact that the Emperor was still, as his official title proclaimed, the Autocrat of All the Russias. On the other hand, if the word Constitution found a place in the document, and was allowed to pass without protest, the Cadets could in future maintain that what they called "the Constitution" had been officially recognised by the Emperor, and they could stigmatise as "unconstitutional" much that was really permissible according to the fundamental laws. In order to avoid these controversies, the Octobrists had adopted a neutral expression—"the State organism renewed in the manifesto of October 30th by your Sovereign will"—and this was finally carried, but not unanimously, for the Extreme Right and the Extreme Left abstained from voting.

When we contrast that address of November 26th, 1907, couched in respectful language and expressing gratitude to the Emperor, with the address presented by the "Duma of the national indignation," on May 17th, 1906, we realise the great progress which had been made towards pacification in the

short space of a year and a half. For that remarkable change the merit belongs largely to M. Stolýpin. At the beginning of his Ministry he formed two resolves, and he clung to them with marvellous tenacity: To suppress disorders relentlessly by every means at his disposal, and to preserve the Duma as long as hopes could be entertained of its doing useful work, while keeping it strictly within the functions assigned to it by the Emperor. Until the assembling of the third Duma he found no cordial support in any of the parties or groups; all were leagued against him. For the Conservative and Reactionary Right, he was too Liberal; for the Revolutionary Left, he was a pillar of Autocracy, an advocate of police repression and drum-head courts martial; for the Cadets, who were the predominant guiding power in the first two Dumas, he was an irreconcilable enemy, who systematically and watchfully prevented them from encroaching on the prerogatives of the Crown as defined by the fundamental laws. In spite of all this, like a courageous pilot, he steered the ship dexterously through successive storms, and at last brought her into comparatively calm water.

Thanks to his exertions, loyally supported by the Octobrists and the moderate Right, the third Duma did much useful legislative work. Favoured by the gradual subsidence of the revolutionary excitement, it fulfilled successfully the functions of a Chamber of Deputies endowed with limited powers. Of the old bureaucratic Council of the Empire, which the October manifesto and subsequent edicts transformed into an Upper Chamber composed of Crown nominees and elective members in equal numbers, it is too soon to speak confidently; but there is good reason to hope that it will likewise fulfil its functions successfully and exercise eventually a restraining and regulating influence on the parliamentary machine. No doubt there will be occasional friction between the two Houses, and between them and the Government, but this is the necessary condition of parliamentary life in all countries, and there is no reason why Russia should be an exception to the general rule.

In order to appreciate fully the difficulties of M. Stolýpin's task, we must remember that he had to struggle not

only with political opposition in the Duma and among the Court officials, but also with the revolutionary agitation, conspiracies, terrorism, and all manner of disorders throughout the country. During the first five weeks of his premiership he had to deal with five local mutinies in the army and navy, and with a long series of murderous attacks with bombs and revolvers on provincial governors, vice-governors, generals, minor officials, and policemen of all grades. He himself had a very narrow escape. His villa in St. Petersburg was blown up with bombs while he was sitting in it at work; he remained unhurt, but a number of his officials and servants were killed or wounded, and one of his daughters, when extricated from the wreckage, was found to be dangerously injured. As an instance of the attacks on the police, an incident in Warsaw may be quoted: According to a preconcerted arrangement, twenty-six policemen and sentries were shot simultaneously by revolutionary agents in different quarters of the town. In other parts of the country burglaries and acts of brigandage were perpetrated with unprecedented audacity in wholesale fashion; banks were attacked by armed youths in broad daylight, and postal trains were held up and robbed. At first these attacks were directed against Government property, and were technically called "expropriations," but the "political expropriators" were soon followed by ordinary robbers and thieves, who could not be controlled by the revolutionary committees. For more than a year this state of things continued, with considerable loss of life. In the month of May, 1907, for example, the list of casualties resulting from the revolutionary disorders amounted to 291 killed and 326 wounded. All this time the agrarian disturbances were still going on in the rural districts, and the means of repression at the disposal of the local authorities was often very inadequate.

By ceaseless, persistent effort, attended necessarily with great severity, public order was gradually restored. For the severity M. Stolypin was much criticised, especially by those who, like the Cadets, did not wish to see tranquillity restored until their political aims had been attained; but the unfavourable judgments passed on him in this respect

were not confirmed by those who knew him personally, and who realised the situation in which he was placed. Naturally of a humane temperament and a singularly affectionate disposition, he would gladly have refrained from all severe measures, but he had to sacrifice his personal feelings to a sense of public duty. Firmly convinced that the vital interests of his country were at stake, he acted as a true patriot. His motives were indicated by a remark he made one day in the Duma. Defending his Government against an attack by a group of revolutionary deputies, he turned to them and said in a voice quivering with emotion: "*You* desire great commotions; *we* desire a great Russia!" As a boy he had been distinguished by his strong patriotic feelings, and in the last years of his life they were the key-note of his policy.

M. Stolýpin did not live to carry out his programme, which aimed at consolidating representative institutions without destroying the Imperial authority. On September 18th, 1911, at a gala performance in the theatre of Kiev, he was shot by a young Jew who was at one and the same time a Terrorist and an agent of the secret police; and four days afterwards he died from the effects of the wound. The post-mortem examination showed that he could not in any case have lived much longer; his health, never very robust, had been thoroughly undermined by overwork and anxieties. For a considerable time he knew that his end was near, but this merely increased his feverish energy, which was concealed under a grave yet cheerful manner. Of the many distinguished Russians whom I have known, he was certainly one of the most sympathetic, and even his enemies, while denying to him the qualities of a great statesman, were constrained to admit that he was an honest, courageous, truthful, and in all respects honourable man.*

* With regard to the dissolution of the second Duma (*vide supra*, p. 736), it has recently been asserted that there was no Social Democrat conspiracy, and that Tsereteli's confession was simply a piece of bravado. I may be permitted, therefore, to mention that I had an opportunity of examining the original documents on which the indictment was founded, and they convinced me that it was amply justified. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the modification of the Electoral Law was technically illegal.

CHAPTER XL

TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND FOREIGN POLICY

THE rapid growth of Russia is one of the most remarkable facts of modern history. An insignificant tribe, or collection of tribes, which, a thousand years ago, was confined to a small district near the sources of the Dnieper and the Western Dvina, has grown into a great nation with a vast territory stretching from the Baltic to the Northern Pacific, and from the Polar Ocean to the frontiers of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and China. We have here a big fact well deserving careful investigation; and as the process is still going on, and is commonly supposed to threaten our national interests, the investigation ought to have for us more than a mere scientific interest.

What is the secret of this expansive power? Is it a mere barbarous lust of territorial aggrandisement, or is it some more reasonable motive? And what is the nature of the process? Is annexation followed by assimilation, or do the new acquisitions retain their old character? Is the Empire in its present extent a homogeneous whole, or merely a conglomeration of heterogeneous units loosely held together by the outward bond of centralised administration? If we could find satisfactory answers to these questions, we might determine how far Russia is strengthened or weakened by her annexations of territory, and might form some plausible conjecture as to how, when and where the process of expansion is to stop.

By glancing at her history from the economic point of view we may easily detect at least one prominent cause of expansion.

In all vigorous races employing merely the primitive methods of agriculture, there is a strong tendency to widen the natural borders. The increase of population demands a constantly increasing production of grain, whilst the

primitive methods of cultivation exhaust the soil and diminish its productivity. With regard to this stage of economic development, the modest assertion of Malthus that the supply of food does not increase so rapidly as the population often falls far short of the truth. As the population increases, the food supply may decrease not only relatively, but absolutely, by the exhaustion of the soil. When a people finds itself in this critical situation, it must adopt one of two alternatives: either it must prevent the increase of population, or it must increase the production of food. In the former case it may adopt the custom of polyandry, which we find in the Arctic regions and in the Himalayas; or it may legalise the habit of "exposing" or otherwise destroying infants, as was done in ancient Greece and some parts of India; or it may sell regularly to foreigners a large portion of the children and young women, as was done in Circassia in comparatively recent times; or the surplus population may emigrate to foreign lands, as the Scandinavians did in the ninth century, and as we ourselves are doing in more peaceable fashion at the present day. The other alternative—that of increasing the food supply—can be effected only in two ways: by increasing the area of cultivation, or by improving the system of agriculture.

The early Russo-Slavonians, being an agricultural people, early experienced this difficulty, but for them it was not very serious. A convenient way of escape was plainly indicated by their peculiar geographical position. They were not hemmed in by lofty mountains or stormy seas, and immediately beyond their frontier, north, east and south, there was abundance of arable land awaiting the labour of the husbandman and ready to reward it liberally. The peasants, therefore, instead of adopting such customs as polyandry and infanticide, selling their daughters, or sweeping the sea as Vikings, simply spread out in the neighbouring thinly peopled territory. This was at once the most natural and the wisest course, for of all the expedients for preserving the equilibrium between population and food production, increasing the area of cultivation is, under the circumstances just described, the easiest and most effective. Theoretically, the same result might have been obtained by

improving the methods of agriculture, but, practically, this was impossible. Intensive culture is never introduced so long as expansion is easy. High farming is a thing to be proud of when there is a scarcity of arable land, but it would be absurd to attempt it where there is abundance of unoccupied virgin soil in the vicinity.

Originally produced in this way by purely economic causes, the process of expansion was accelerated by influences of another and less impersonal kind, when the ambitious Moscow princes were transforming the loose conglomeration of independent principalities into a centralised Tsardom, and when the later monarchs were transforming the half-barbarous Tsardom into a European Empire. These changes were not effected without imposing severe hardships on the population and causing much popular discontent. The increase in the number of officials, the augmentation of the taxes, the merciless exactions of the Voyevods and their subordinates, the reduction of the peasants and "free wandering people" to the condition of serfs, the ritual innovations and the consequent cruel persecution of the Nonconformists, the frequent conscriptions and violent reforms of Peter the Great—these and other kinds of oppression made thousands flee yearly from their homes to seek refuge in the free territory, where there were no officials, no tax gatherers, and no landed proprietors. But the State, with its army of tax gatherers and officials, followed close on the heels of the fugitives, and those who wished to preserve their liberty had to advance still farther into the no-man's land. Notwithstanding the efforts of the authorities to retain the population in the localities actually occupied, the wave of colonisation moved steadily onwards.

The vast territory which lay open to the colonists consisted of two contiguous regions, separated from each other by no mountains or rivers, but widely differing from each other in many respects. The one, comprising all the northern zone of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, may be roughly described as a land of forests, intersected by many streams, and containing many lakes and marshes; the other, stretching southward to the Black Sea and the Caucasus and eastward far away into Central Asia, is for

the most part flat or undulating plains, with a very limited supply of water—what the Russians call the Steppe and what Americans might call the prairies.

Each of these two regions presented peculiar inducements and peculiar obstacles to colonisation. So far as the facility for raising grain was concerned, the southern region was decidedly preferable. In the north the soil was covered with dense forests, so that much time and labour had to be expended in making a clearing before the seed could be sown. In the south, on the contrary, the squatter had no trees to fell and no clearing to make; Nature had cleared the land for him and supplied him with a rich black soil of such marvellous fertility that it has not yet been completely exhausted after centuries of cultivation. Why, then, did the peasant often prefer the northern forest to the fertile Steppe?

For this apparent inconsistency there was a good and valid reason. The muzhik had not, even in these good old times, any love of labour for its own sake, nor was he by any means insensible to the facilities for farming afforded him by the Steppe. But he could not regard the subject exclusively from the agricultural point of view. He had to take into consideration the fauna as well as the flora of the two regions. At the head of the fauna in the northern region stood the peace-loving, laborious Finnish tribes, little disposed to molest settlers who did not make themselves obnoxiously aggressive; on the Steppe lived the predatory, nomadic hordes, ever ready to attack, plunder, and carry off as slaves the unwarlike agricultural population. These facts, as well as the agricultural conditions, were known to intending colonists, and influenced them in their choice of a new home. Though generally fearless and fatalistic in a high degree, they could not entirely overlook the dangers of the Steppe, and many of them preferred to encounter the hard work of the forest region.

These differences in the natural features and population of the two regions determined the character of the colonisation. Though the expansion into the northern zone was not effected entirely without bloodshed, it was, on the whole, of a peaceful kind, and consequently received little attention from the con-

temporary chroniclers. The colonisation of the Steppe, on the contrary, required the help of the Cossacks, and it presents, as I have shown in a previous chapter, one of the bloodiest pages of Russian history.

So much for the spontaneous expansive movement made necessary by economic considerations and accelerated by official oppression. We pass now to the part played by the rulers, actuated by political aims. This is the second factor in the territorial expansion.

In the expansion to the north and north-east this factor played a very subordinate part, because the Government had simply to annex officially and organise administratively the territory into which the peasants had penetrated in large numbers of their own accord, and we hear very little about resistance on the part of the older Finnish inhabitants. In the southern and eastern regions the Government had a much more difficult task. There the agricultural population had to be constantly protected along an ill-defined frontier of enormous length, lying open at all points to the attacks and incursions of war-like predatory tribes. To prevent raids it was necessary to keep up a military cordon, and this means did not always afford efficient protection to those living near the border. The nomads sometimes came in formidable hordes, which could be resisted only by large armies, and the armies were not always strong enough to cope with them successfully. Again and again, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Tartar hordes swept over the country—burning the villages and towns, and spreading devastation wherever they appeared—and during more than two hundred years Russia had to pay a heavy tribute to their nominal suzerains, the successors of the famous Genghis Khan.

Gradually the Tsars of Muscovy threw off this galling yoke. Ivan the Terrible conquered and annexed the three Khanates of the Lower Volga—Kazan, Kiptchak, and Astrakhan—and in that way he averted the danger of a foreign domination. But permanent security was not thereby created for the outlying provinces. The Khans of the Crimea long maintained their independence under the protection of the Sultan of Constantinople, and in their territory the slave

markets were kept plentifully supplied by means of kidnapping expeditions into Russia and Poland.

To protect a naturally open frontier against the incursions of nomadic tribes, three methods are possible: the construction of a great wall, the establishment of a strong military cordon, and the permanent subjugation of the marauders. The first of these expedients, adopted by the Romans in Britain and by the Chinese on their north-western frontier, is always enormously expensive, and it was utterly impossible in Southern Russia, where there is little or no stone for building purposes; the second was constantly tried, and constantly found wanting; the third alone proved practicable and efficient. Though the Government soon came to recognise that the acquisition of vast expanses of thinly populated Steppe was, in many respects, a burden rather than an advantage, it went on annexing new territory as a means of self-defence. Its policy consisted in making what might be called turning movements on a gigantic scale by planting fortified posts and Cossack cordons far in advance of the actual frontier; and this strategy was generally successful, for as soon as a lawless population found the enemy in their rear they restrained their marauding propensities and gradually submitted. If the history of Russia's Eastern conquests be studied from this point of view, it becomes much more intelligible in its details.

In consequence of this active part which the Government took in the extension of the territory, the process of political expansion sometimes got greatly ahead of the colonisation. After the Turkish wars and consequent annexations in the reign of Catherine II., for example, a great part of Southern Russia was almost uninhabited, and the deficiency had to be corrected, as we have seen, by organised emigration from Germany and other foreign countries.

If we turn now from the East to the West we shall find that the national expansion in this direction was of a very different kind. The country lying to the westward of the early Russo-Slavonian settlements had a poor soil and a comparatively dense population, and it consequently held out little inducement to immigration. It was inhabited, moreover, by warlike agricultural races, organised in more

or less civilised communities, which were not only capable of defending their own territory, but even strongly disposed to make encroachments on their eastern neighbours. Russian expansion to the westward, therefore, was not a spontaneous movement of the peasantry, but the work of the Government, acting deliberately and laboriously by means of diplomacy and military force; it had, however, a certain historical justification.

No sooner had Russia freed herself, in the fifteenth century, from the Mongol domination than her political independence, and even her national existence, was threatened from the West. Her western neighbours were, like herself, animated with that tendency to national expansion which I have just described, and for a time it seemed doubtful who should ultimately possess the vast plains of Eastern Europe. The chief competitors for this splendid prize were the Tsars of Muscovy and the Kings of Poland, and the latter appeared to have the better chance. In close connection with Western Europe, they had been able to adopt many of the improvements recently made in the art of war, and they already possessed the upper basin of the Dnieper. Once, with the help of the Free Cossacks, they succeeded in overrunning the central part of Muscovy, and a son of the Polish King was elected Tsar in Moscow. By attempting to accomplish their purpose in too hasty and reckless a fashion, they raised a storm of religious and patriotic fanaticism, which very soon drove them out of their newly acquired possessions; but the country remained in a very precarious position, and its native rulers perceived that in order to carry on the struggle successfully they must import something of that Western civilisation which gave such an advantage to their Polish rivals.

Some steps had already been taken in that direction. In the year 1553 an English navigator, whilst seeking for a short route to China and India by the Arctic Ocean, had accidentally discovered the port of Archangel on the White Sea, and from that time the Tsars kept up an intermittent diplomatic and commercial intercourse with England. But this route was at all times tedious and dangerous, and during a great part of the year it was blocked with ice. In

view of these difficulties, the Tsars had tried to import "cunning foreign artificers" by way of the Baltic; but their efforts were hampered by the Livonian Order, who held the east coast of that inland sea, and who considered, like the Europeans on the coast of Africa at the present day, that the barbarous natives of the interior ought not to be supplied with arms and ammunition. All the other direct routes to Western Europe traversed likewise the territory of rivals, who might at any moment become avowed enemies. Under these circumstances the Tsars naturally desired to break through the barrier which hemmed them in, and the acquisition of the east coast of the Baltic became one of the permanent aims of Russian foreign policy.

In addition to the Poles and the Livonian Order, the Swedes blocked the way. They had early conquered a large amount of territory to the east of the Baltic, including the mouths of the Neva, where St. Petersburg now stands, and they harboured schemes of further conquests. On one occasion they even succeeded, like the Poles, in occupying Moscow for a short time.

Compared with these Western rivals, Russia was weak in all that concerned the art of war, but she had two immense advantages: she had a very large population, and a strong stable government, which could concentrate and direct the national forces for any definite purpose. All she required for success in the competition was an army on the European model; and it was supplied by Peter the Great. From that moment the westward expansion went on steadily. Sweden gradually lost all her trans-Baltic possessions, of which the last—the Grand Duchy of Finland—was ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Frederickshamm in 1809. Poland not only lost her hold on the Baltic, but was dismembered by her powerful neighbours, and Russia took the lion's share of the spoil. At the present day she possesses the whole of the eastern shore of the Baltic, and her western land frontier is contiguous with the eastern frontiers of Germany and Austria.

Peter the Great's efforts to gain a footing on the Baltic were only part of a much larger design: he aspired to make his country a great naval Power, and for this purpose he

required, not only in the Baltic but elsewhere, long stretches of sea coast, with good harbours for a navy and a mercantile marine. When struggling with Sweden in the north, he had already begun to cast longing eyes on the Black Sea. In that direction his efforts were unsuccessful, for after conquering Azov, and forming plans for its development as a port and arsenal, he was compelled to restore it to the Turks. But his ideas have been carried out in an improved form by his successors, and Russia has now a powerful Black Sea fleet.

It must not, however, be supposed that the so-called "warm-water policy" initiated by Peter the Great has been thereby completely realised. In a certain sense the Black Sea is a mere inland lake, for the outlet is held by the Sultan, and in ordinary circumstances no Russian ship of war can pass out into the Mediterranean. So long, therefore, as the Turks occupy Constantinople and the Straits, Russia cannot be regarded as a first-rate naval Power. This leads us to the consideration of another element in the tendency to territorial expansion—a powerful current of national sentiment which has exercised during many generations a certain political influence on the Government. For want of a better term, I may call it the Byzantine factor in Russian foreign policy.

Let me recall here very briefly an important episode in Russian history which I have dealt with more fully in previous chapters. The Russo-Slavonians who held the valley of the Dnieper from the ninth to the thirteenth century were one of those frontier tribes which the tottering Byzantine Empire attempted to ward off by diplomacy and rich gifts, and by giving to the troublesome chiefs, on condition of their accepting Christianity, princesses of the Imperial family as brides. Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev, now recognised as a saint by the Russian Church, accepted Christianity in this way (A.D. 988), and his subjects followed his example. Russia thus became ecclesiastically a part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the people learned to regard Tsargrad —the city of the Tsar, as the Byzantine Emperor was then called—with peculiar veneration.

All through the long Mongol domination, when the

nomadic tribes of the Steppe formed a barrier between Russia and the Balkan Peninsula, the capital of the Eastern Orthodox world was remembered and venerated by the Russian people, and in the fifteenth century it acquired in their eyes a new significance. At that time it fell under the power of the Mahometan Turks, and the Byzantine Emperors disappeared, whilst Moscow threw off the yoke of the Mahometan Tartars, the northern representatives of the Turkish race. The Grand Prince of Moscow thereby became, as it were, the Protector of the Faith, and in some sort the successor of the Byzantine Tsars. To strengthen this claim, Ivan III. married a niece of the last Byzantine Emperor, and his successors went farther in the same direction by assuming the title of Tsar and inventing a fable about their ancestor Rurik having been a descendant of Cæsar Augustus.

All this would seem to a lawyer, or even to a diplomatist, a very shadowy title, and none of the Russian monarchs—except perhaps Catherine II., who conceived the project of resuscitating the Byzantine Empire, and caused one of her grandsons to learn modern Greek in view of possible contingencies—ever thought seriously of claiming the imaginary inheritance. But the idea that the Tsars ought to reign in Constantinople, and that St. Sophia, polluted by Moslem abominations, should be restored to the Orthodox Christians, struck deep root in the minds of the Russian people, and it is still by no means extinct. As soon as serious disturbances break out in the Near East, the peasantry begin to think that perhaps the time has come for undertaking a crusade for the recovery of the Holy City on the Bosphorus, and for the liberation of their brethren in the faith who groan under Turkish bondage.

Essentially different from this religious sentiment, though often blending with it, is a vague feeling of racial affinity, which has long existed among the various Slav nationalities and was greatly developed during last century by writers of the Panslavist school. When Germans and Italians were striving after political independence and unity, it naturally occurred to the Slavs that they might do likewise. The idea became popular among the Slav subject-nationalities of Austria and Turkey, and it awoke a certain mild enthusiasm

in Moscow, where the Slavophils hoped that "all the Slav streams would unite in the great Russian sea." This was not an unreasonable expectation, for in any confederacy of Slav nationalities the hegemony would naturally devolve upon Russia, the only Slav State which has succeeded in becoming a great Power.

In ordinary times the official world of St. Petersburg was wont to look askance at the efforts of the Moscow Slavophils to awaken sympathy for the Slavs of Austria and Turkey, because there was reason to fear that these imprudent patriots might try to raise the Eastern Question at a moment when serious European complications would be extremely inconvenient for the Government. On the other hand, the authorities refrained from all vigorous repressive measures, because the Foreign Office understood that when the time should come for attempting a further advance towards the Mediterranean, the Slavophil sentiment, if judiciously controlled and directed, might be used as a valuable asset in foreign policy.

A description of the various methods adopted by Russia at different times to make that further advance does not enter into my present programme, but I may say briefly that the expansive tendency in that direction is due to the combined action of the three factors just mentioned: the religious feeling of the common people, the Slavophil or Panslavist sentiments of the educated classes, and the political aims of the Government. This has never been better exemplified than in the last struggle with Turkey (1877-8), culminating in the Treaty of San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin.

The origin, or at least the immediate cause, of that struggle is to be sought not in St. Petersburg, but in Vienna. In the exalted official spheres of that capital there had long been, what Bismarck termed, a "Drang nach Osten"—a desire to find in Turkey territorial compensation for the loss of the Italian provinces in the Franco-Austrian war of 1859. The first step towards the realisation of that desire was the Herzegovinian insurrection, which began in 1875. At first the Russian Foreign Office did not sympathise with the insurrectionary movement, because it habitually regards with jealousy and suspicion the secret diplomatic activity of

Vienna in the Balkan Peninsula; but it changed its attitude when it perceived that compensation to Austria for her losses in the Italian campaign might perhaps be combined with compensation to Russia for her losses in the Crimean war. If Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, why should not Russia recover the territory at the mouth of the Danube ceded in the Treaty of Paris, and obtain, perhaps, a portion of Eastern Bulgaria? After long and laborious negotiations, a diplomatic compromise was effected on that basis, and the war began.

By this time the Government was warmly supported both by the Slavophil and the religious sentiment, stimulated greatly by the "Bulgarian atrocities"; and it naturally lent an attentive ear to the cry raised in England for the expulsion of the Turks, "bag and baggage," from Europe. But before the Eastern Question could be radically solved in this way, the tide of public opinion in England turned; Disraeli roused the traditional jealousy of Russia and found diplomatic support in Vienna, and the large concessions extorted from Turkey at San Stefano were reduced to moderate dimensions at the Congress of Berlin.

Among all classes in Russia this result produced feelings of profound disappointment. The peasantry bewailed the fact that the crescent on St. Sophia had not been replaced by the cross; the Slavophil patriots were indignant that Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were to have formed part of the future Slav confederacy, had passed under the domination of Austria, and that many of the "Little Brothers" had shown themselves unworthy of the generous efforts and sacrifices made on their behalf; the Government recognised that the acquisition of the Straits must be indefinitely postponed. Then history repeated itself. After the Crimean war, in accordance with Prince Gortchakoff's famous epigram, *La Russie ne bonde pas, elle se recueille,* Alexander II. had abandoned for some years an active policy in Europe and made new acquisitions of territory and influence in Asia. So now Alexander III., turning his back on the "Slav brethren," inaugurated an era of peace in Europe and of territorial expansion in the East.

I must now say a few words about another factor in

Russia's territorial expansion of much more recent origin but of increasing importance. She is rapidly becoming, as I have explained in a previous chapter, a great industrial and commercial nation, and she is anxious to secure new markets for her manufactured goods. Though her industries cannot yet supply her own wants, she likes to peg out claims for the future, so as not to be forestalled by more advanced nations. She does not, indeed, make conquests exclusively for this purpose, but whenever it happens that she has other reasons for widening her borders, the idea of obtaining commercial advantages acts as a subsidiary incentive, and as soon as the territory is annexed she raises round it a line of commercial fortifications in the shape of customs houses, through which foreign goods have great difficulty in forcing their way. This subsidiary incentive contributed largely to the construction of the Trans-Siberian railway and to the bringing on of the war with Japan.

This commercial policy seems quite intelligible and even laudable from the patriotic point of view; but Russians like to justify it, and condemn English competition on higher grounds. England, they say, is like a successful manufacturer who has outstripped all his rivals and who seeks to prevent any new competitors from coming into the field. By her mercantile policy she has become the great blood-sucker of other nations. Having no cause to fear competition, she advocates the insidious principles of Free Trade, and inundates foreign countries with her manufactures to such an extent that unprotected native industries are inevitably ruined. Thus all nations have long paid tribute to England; but the era of emancipation has dawned. The fallacies of Free Trade have been detected and exposed, and Russia, like other young nations, has found in the beneficent power of protective tariffs a means of escape from British economic thraldom. Henceforth, not only the muzhiks of European Russia, but also the populations of Central Asia, will be saved from the heartless exploitation of Manchester and Birmingham—and be handed over, I presume, to the tender mercies of the manufacturers of Moscow and St. Petersburg, who sell their goods much dearer than their English competitors.

To sum up we may say that, if we have read Russian history aright, the wonderful expansion of Russia has been caused chiefly (1) by spontaneous colonisation, (2) by the necessities of self-defence against marauding tribes, (3) by high political aims, such as the acquisition of sea coasts and harbours, with a view to making the country a great naval Power, (4) by the religious idea of expelling the Mussulmans from Constantinople and protecting the brethren of the Orthodox faith, (5) by the aspiration to establish a Russian hegemony over the Slav nationalities, and (6) by the intention of extending Russian commerce and developing Russian industry.

To this brief summary we may add that the process of expansion has been greatly facilitated by peculiar geographical conditions and the autocratic form of government, and that the result has been very remarkable. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Ivan III. united the independent principalities and created the Tsardom of Muscovy, the territorial expansion has gone on without interruption and with marvellous rapidity. In 1505 the Muscovite Tsardom contained only about three-quarters of a million of English square miles, and in 1682, when Peter the Great ascended the throne, it contained more than five and a half millions. Though famous as a conqueror, Peter did not annex nearly so much territory as some of his predecessors and successors. At his death, in 1725, the Empire contained, in round numbers, 5,830,000 square miles, and this figure has now increased to 8,648,000, about one-seventh of the land-surface of the globe. With this rapid territorial expansion, the increase of population has more than kept pace. Since 1722, when the first census was taken, until the present time the increase has been from 14 to 164 millions. Thus, in extent and population, from small beginnings Russia has grown to be one of the greatest Empires in the world, second only to the sporadic British Empire, which is computed to have an area of nearly 11½ million square miles, with 400 million inhabitants.

Having thus analysed the expansive tendency and glanced at its results, let us endeavour to determine roughly how the various factors of which it is composed are acting

in the present and are likely to act in the near future. In this investigation it will be well to begin with the simpler, and proceed gradually to the more complex, parts of the problem.

Towards the north and the west the history of Russian expansion may be regarded as practically closed. Northwards there is nothing to annex but the Arctic Ocean and the Polar regions; westwards, annexations at the expense of Germany or Austria are not to be thought of, though some Slavophils speak of Austrian Galicia as being geographically and ethnographically a part of Russia. There remains, therefore, only Sweden and Norway. They may possibly at some future time come within the range of Russia's territorial appetite, but for the present the only part of the Scandinavian peninsula which she is supposed to covet is a barren district in the extreme north, which is said to contain several excellent warm-water harbours.

It is, therefore, only on the long southern frontier, stretching from the eastern borders of Austria-Hungary to the shores of the Pacific, that the expansive tendency is likely, sooner or later, to manifest itself. At present, since the Japanese war, it is in one of its quiescent periods, and we may assume that it will not produce any serious international disturbances until the Government has had time to reorganise its military and naval forces; but it is well to be on the alert, and we may be pardoned for making, while the storm-clouds are still below the horizon, a rapid, unprofessional tour from west to east in order to take a bird's-eye view of the contiguous regions and examine cursorily how far they offer temptations to foreign aggression from the north.

Regarding the Balkan Peninsula, I have already explained that Russia is pushed in that direction by the combined influence of three internal forces—the religious feelings of the common people, the Slavophil or Panslavist sentiments of the educated classes, and the desire of the Government to have unrestricted access to the Mediterranean. That three-fold pressure constitutes the essence of the Eastern Question in the older and narrower sense of the term. As to when and how that formidable question which

has produced so many wars will be reopened, it would be idle to speculate, but we must not lightly assume that the date of the inevitable reopening may be placed far away in the distant future. Though Russia accepts silently the *status quo*, and is not likely to disturb it by any act of violence till she has recovered from her present military exhaustion, she regards it as merely temporary and as not at all in accordance with her permanent interests. Of this fact we have had recently some significant proofs, one of which may be cited by way of illustration. When Count Aehrenthal was preparing, in 1908, to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, and confidentially foreshadowed his intentions at the famous Büchlau interview, M. Iswolsky at once threw out the suggestion that Russia might receive compensation by some change in the existing international arrangements, which close the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to Russian ships of war. Insignificant in itself, this incident may be regarded as the proverbial straw which shows how the wind is blowing.

But it is not merely by aggressive action on the part of Russia that the formidable question may be prematurely reopened. We have lately seen in Turkey important changes which may eventually disturb the unstable political equilibrium in south-eastern Europe. It is no secret that the Young Turks are devoting to armaments an inordinate proportion of their slender resources; and though their immediate object is to establish firmly the predominance of the Turkish element in their own Empire, they give occasionally, notwithstanding their pacific assurances, unmistakable indications of a chauvinistic spirit, which may accidentally involve them in international complications. There is such a large accumulation of combustible material in that part of the world that we are often reminded of the common saying about the danger of playing with lucifer matches in a powder magazine.

In Persia, which is our next halting-place, the danger of complications arises not from aggressive intentions, but from internal weakness. The potentate who wears the proud traditional title of "King of Kings" has become a very shadowy personage in the political world, and his monarchy

is in danger of falling to pieces. This unfortunate state of things offers to Russia a strong temptation to extend her borders in that quarter. For several generations she has pursued the policy of pacific infiltration, and already the northern part of the Shah's dominions is pretty well permeated with her influence, commercial and political. In the southern half the infiltration is to some extent checked by natural obstacles and British opposition, and we have recently made with the Cabinet of St. Petersburg a convention which excludes Russian activity from the region lying near the Indian frontier; but the central and western portions of the country remain open to her advance, and in the minds of some of her high officials there is a scheme for obtaining a commercial outlet on the Persian Gulf. This idea, I need hardly say, finds great favour with the politicians of "the warm-water school" and among all who wish to promote the rapid development of the national commerce and industry.

In the neighbouring country of Afghanistan the pressure from the north is likewise felt, and here, too, the expansive tendency meets with opposition from England. More than once the two great Powers have come dangerously near to a direct collision—notably in 1885, at the moment of the Penjdeh incident, when the British Parliament voted £11,000,000 for military preparations. Fortunately, the difficulties at that time were solved by diplomacy. The northern frontier of Afghanistan was demarcated by a joint commission, and an agreement was concluded by which this frontier should form the boundary between the British and Russian spheres of influence. On the whole, Russia has faithfully respected this engagement, though occasionally some of her enterprising frontier officers have tried to evade it. During our South African difficulties, at the suggestion of a foreign Sovereign, the idea of a military demonstration in that region was momentarily entertained in St. Petersburg, but it did not find favour with the Emperor, and objections were raised by the military authorities. These latter deprecated such a movement of troops, on the ground that in a country like Afghanistan it might easily develop into a serious campaign, and that a serious campaign ought not to be undertaken until after the completion of the Orenburg-Tashkent

railway, which was to connect the Central Asian line with the railway system of European Russia.

As this important connecting line has since been completed, and a branch line has been constructed to Kushk, on the Afghan frontier, within striking distance of Herat, the question naturally arises whether Russia meditates an attack on India. It is a question which is not easily answered. No doubt many Russians have been fascinated with the idea of some day conquering our Indian Empire, with its teeming millions and the fabulous treasures which it is supposed to possess, and not a few young officers have hastily assumed that it would be an easy task. Further, it is certain that the problem of an invasion from the military point of view has been studied academically by the Headquarters' Staff in St. Petersburg, as the problem of an invasion of England has been studied by the Headquarters' Staff in Berlin. It may be pretty safely asserted, however, that the project of an invasion of India has never been seriously entertained in the Russian official world since the days of the Emperor Paul, who suddenly ordered a Cossack detachment to be dispatched to the Indian frontier through countries which had never been explored. What has been seriously entertained, not only in the official world, but by the Government itself, is the idea—strongly recommended by the late General Skobelev—that Russia should get within striking distance of our Indian possessions, so that she might always be able to exercise strong diplomatic pressure on the British Government, and in the event of a European war immobilise a large part of the British army.

The expansive tendency in the direction of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean was temporarily weakened by the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the rapid development of a forward policy in the Far East. Never, perhaps, has the construction of a single line produced such deep and lasting changes in the sphere of *Weltpolitik*.

As soon as the Trans-Siberian Railway was being rapidly constructed, a magnificent prospect opened up to the gaze of imaginative politicians in St. Petersburg. The foreground was Manchuria, a region of 364,000 square miles, endowed by nature with enormous mineral resources, and

presenting a splendid field for agricultural colonisation and commercial enterprise. Beyond was seen Korea, geographically an appendix of Manchuria, possessing splendid harbours, and occupied by an effete, unwarlike population, wholly incapable of resisting a European Power. That was quite enough to inflame the imagination of patriotic Russians; but there was something more, dimly perceived in the background. Once in possession of Manchuria, supplied with a network of railways, Russia would dominate Peking and the whole of Northern China, and she would thus be able to play a decisive part in the approaching struggle of the European Powers for the Far-Eastern Sick Man's inheritance.

Of course, there were obstacles in the way of realising this grandiose scheme, and there were some cool heads in St. Petersburg who were not slow to point them out. In the first place the undertaking must be extremely costly, and the economic condition of Russia proper was not such as to justify the expenditure of an enormous capital which must be for many years unproductive. Any superfluous capital which the country might possess was much more urgently required for purposes of internal development, and the impoverished agricultural population ought not to be drained of their last meagre reserves for the sake of gigantic political schemes which did not directly contribute to their material welfare. To this the enthusiastic advocates of the forward policy replied that the national finances had never been in such a prosperous condition, that the revenue was increasing by leaps and bounds, that the money invested in the proposed enterprise would soon be repaid with interest; and that if Russia did not at once seize the opportunity she would find herself forestalled by energetic rivals.

There was still, however, one formidable objection. Such an enormous increase of Russia's power in the Far East would inevitably arouse the jealousy and opposition of other Powers, especially of Japan, for whom the future of Korea and Manchuria was a question of life and death. Here again the advocates of the forward policy had their answer ready. They declared that the danger was more apparent than real. In Far-Eastern diplomacy the European Powers could not

compete with Russia, and they might easily be bought off by giving them a very modest share of the spoil; as for Japan, she was not formidable, for she was just emerging from Oriental barbarism, and all her boasted progress was nothing more than a thin veneer of European civilisation. As the Moscow patriots on the eve of the Crimean War said contemptuously of the Allies, "We have only to throw our hats at them," so now the believers in Russia's historic mission in the Far East spoke of their future opponents as "monkeys" and "parrots." Urged on by these short-sighted enthusiasts and by certain influential personages who had material interests in the coveted territory, the Government allowed itself to be carried away by the current of pseudo-patriotism and drifted into war.

In order to explain this fatal mistake on the part of the Government, I must recall very briefly the main course of events leading up to the crisis.

In 1905, at the close of the Chino-Japanese War, Japan compelled the Chinese to cede to her the peninsula of Liaotung, a southward prolongation of Manchuria, jutting out into the Yellow Sea, between the Chinese coast and Korea, and dominating the sea route to Pekin. This seizure of an important strategical position by a young, ambitious and enterprising Power displeased and alarmed not only Russia, but also Germany and France, who had designs of their own on Chinese territory. The three Cabinets accordingly formed a coalition, and compelled Japan to withdraw from the mainland on the pretext that the integrity of China must be maintained. In this way China recovered, for a moment, a bit of lost territory, and further benefits were conferred on her by a guarantee for a foreign loan and by the creation of the Russo-Chinese Bank, which would assist her in her financial affairs. For these and other favours she was expected to be grateful, and it was suggested to her that her gratitude might take the form of facilitating the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway. If constructed wholly on Russian territory, the line would have to make an enormous bend to the northward, whereas if it went straight from Lake Baikal to Vladivostock, through Chinese territory, it would be very much shorter, and would confer

a very great benefit on the north-eastern provinces of the Celestial Empire. This benefit, moreover, might be greatly increased by making a branch line to Talienwan and Port Arthur, which would some day be united with Pekin. Gradually Li-Hung-Chang and other influential Chinese officials were induced to sympathise with the scheme, and permission was granted for the construction of the direct line to Vladivostock through Manchuria.

The retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula had not been effected by Russia alone. Germany and France had co-operated, and they also expected from China a mark of gratitude in some tangible form. On this point the statesmen of Berlin held very strong views, and they thought it advisable to obtain a material guarantee for the fulfilment of their expectations by seizing Kiaochau, on the ground that German missionaries had been murdered by Chinese fanatics.

For Russia this was a most unwelcome incident. She had earmarked Kiaochau for her own purposes, and had already made an agreement with the authorities in Peking that the harbour might be used freely by her fleet. And this was not the worst. The incident might inaugurate an era of partition for which she was not yet prepared, and another port which she had earmarked for her own use might be seized by a rival. Already English ships of war were reported to be examining in a suspicious manner the neighbouring coast. The Cabinet of St. Petersburg hastened to demand, therefore, as a set-off for the loss of Kiaochau, a lease of Port Arthur and Talienwan, situated near the southern point of the Liaotung Peninsula, and a railway concession to unite these ports with her Trans-Siberian Railway. The Chinese Government was too weak to think of refusing the demands, and the process of gradually absorbing Manchuria began, in accordance with a plan already roughly sketched out in St. Petersburg.

In the light of a few authentic documents and many subsequent events, the outline of this plan can be traced with tolerable accuracy. In the region through which the projected railways were to run there was a large marauding population, and consequently the labourers and the works

would have to be protected; and as Chinese troops can never be thoroughly relied on, the protecting force must be Russian. Under this rather transparent disguise a small army of occupation could be gradually introduced, and in establishing a *modus vivendi* between it and the Chinese civil and military authorities, a predominant influence in the local administration might be established. At the same time, by energetic diplomatic action at Pekin, which would be brought within striking distance by the railways, all rival foreign influences might be excluded from the occupied provinces, and the rest might be left to the action of "spontaneous infiltration." Thus, while professing to uphold the principle of the territorial integrity of the Celestial Empire, the Cabinet of St. Petersburg might practically annex the whole of Manchuria, and transform Port Arthur into a great naval port and arsenal, a far more effectual "Dominator of the East" than Vladivostock, which was intended, as its name implies, to fulfil that function. From Manchuria the political influence and the spontaneous infiltration would naturally extend to Korea, and on the deeply indented coast of the Hermit Kingdom new ports and arsenals, far more spacious and strategically more important than Port Arthur, might be constructed.

The grandiose scheme was carefully laid, and for a time it was favoured by circumstances. In 1900 the Boxer troubles justified Russia in sending a large force into Manchuria, and enabled her subsequently to play the part of China's protector against the inordinate demands of the Western Powers for compensation and guarantees. For a moment it seemed as if the slow process of gradual infiltration might be replaced by a more expeditious mode of annexation. As the dexterous diplomacy of Ignatiev in 1858 had induced the Son of Heaven to cede to Russia the rich Primorsk provinces between the Amur and the sea, in return for Russian protection against the English and French, who had burnt his Summer Palace, so his successor might now perhaps be induced to cede Manchuria to the Tsar for similar reasons.

No such cession actually took place, but the Russian diplomatists in Pekin could use the gratitude argument in

support of their demands for an extension of the rights and privileges of the "temporary" occupation; and when China sought to resist the pressure by leaning on the rival Powers she found them to be little better than broken reeds. France could not openly oppose her ally, and Germany had reasons of her own for conciliating the Tsar, whilst England and the United States, though avowedly opposing the scheme as dangerous to their commercial interests, were not prepared to go to war in defence of their policy. It seemed, therefore, that by patience, tenacity and diplomatic dexterity Russia might ultimately attain her ends. But a surprise was in store for her. There was one Power which recognised that her own vital interests were at stake, and which was ready to undertake in defence of them a life-and-death struggle.

Though still smarting under the humiliation of her expulsion from the Liaotung Peninsula in 1895, and watching with the keenest interest every move in the political game, Japan had remained for some time in the background, and had confined her efforts to resisting Russian influence in Korea and supporting diplomatically the Powers who were upholding the policy of the open door. Now, when it had become evident that the Western Powers would not prevent the realisation of the Russian scheme, she determined to intervene energetically, and to stake her national existence on the result. Ever since 1895 she had been making military and naval preparations for the day of the *revanche*, and now that day was at hand. Against the danger of a coalition such as had checkmated her on the previous occasion she was protected by an alliance which she had concluded with England in 1902, and she felt confident that with Russia alone she was quite capable of dealing single-handed. Her position is briefly and graphically described in a dispatch, telegraphed at that time (July 28th, 1903) by the Japanese Government to its representative at St. Petersburg, instructing him to open negotiations:

"The recent conduct of Russia in making new demands at Pekin and tightening her hold upon Manchuria has led the Imperial Government to believe that she must have abandoned her intention of retiring from that province. At the same time, her increased activity upon the Korean frontier is such as to raise doubts as to the limits of her

ambition. The unconditional and permanent occupation of Manchuria by Russia would create a state of things prejudicial to the security and interests of Japan. The principle of equal opportunity (the open door) would thereby be annulled, and the territorial integrity of China impaired. There is, however, a still more serious consideration for the Japanese Government. If Russia were established on the flank of Korea she would constantly menace the separate existence of that Empire, or at least exercise in it a predominant influence; and as Japan considers Korea an important outpost in her line of defence, she regards its independence as absolutely essential to her own repose and safety. Moreover, the political as well as commercial and industrial interests and influence which Japan possesses in Korea are paramount over those of other Powers; she cannot, having regard to her own security, consent to surrender them to, or share them with, another Power."

In accordance with this view of the situation, the Japanese Government informed Count Lamsdorff that, as it desired to remove from the relations of the two Empires every cause of future misunderstanding, it would be glad to enter with the Imperial Russian Government upon an examination of the condition of affairs in the Far East, with a view to defining the respective special interests of the two countries in those regions.

Though Count Lamsdorff accepted the proposal with apparent cordiality and professed to regard it as a means of preventing any outsider from sowing the seeds of discord between the two countries, the idea of a general discussion was not at all welcome. Careful definition of respective interests was the last thing the Russian Government desired. Its policy was to keep the whole situation in a haze until it had consolidated its position in Manchuria and on the Korean frontier to such an extent that it could dictate its own terms in any future arrangement. It could not, however, consistently with its oft-repeated declarations of disinterestedness and love of peace, decline to discuss the subject. It consented, therefore, to an exchange of views, but in order to ensure that the tightening of its hold on the territories in question should proceed *pari passu* with the diplomatic action, it made an extraordinary departure from ordinary procedure, entrusting the conduct of the affair, not to Count Lamsdorff and the Foreign Office, but to Admiral Alexeyev, the newly created Viceroy of the Far East, in whom

was vested the control of all civil, military, naval, and diplomatic affairs relating to that part of the world.

From the commencement of the negotiations, which lasted from August 12th, 1903, to February 6th, 1904, the irreconcilable differences of the two rivals became apparent, and all through the correspondence, in which a few apparent concessions were offered by Japan, neither Power retreated a step from the positions originally taken up. What Japan suggested was, roughly speaking, a mutual engagement to uphold the independence and integrity of the Chinese and Korean empires, and at the same time a bilateral arrangement by which the special interests of the two contracting parties in Manchuria and in Korea should be formally recognised, and the means of protecting them clearly defined. The scheme did not commend itself to the Russians. They systematically ignored the interests of Japan in Manchuria, and maintained that she had no right to interfere in any arrangements they might think fit to make with the Chinese Government regarding that province. In their opinion, Japan ought to recognise formally that Manchuria lay outside her sphere of interest, and the negotiations should be confined to limiting her freedom of action in Korea.

With such a wide divergence in principle the two parties were not likely to agree in matters of detail. Their conflicting aims came out most clearly in the question of the open door. The Japanese insisted on obtaining the privileges of the open door, including the right of settlement, in Manchuria, and Russia obstinately refused. Having marked out Manchuria as a close reserve for her own colonisation, trade, and industry, and knowing that she could not compete with the Japanese if they were freely admitted, she declined to adopt the principle of "equal opportunity" which her rivals recommended. A *fidus Achates* of Admiral Alexeyev explained to me quite frankly, during the negotiations, why no concessions could be made on that point. In the work of establishing law and order in Manchuria, constructing roads, bridges, railways, and towns, Russia had expended an enormous sum—estimated by Count Cassini at £60,000,000—and until that capital was recovered, or until a reasonable interest was derived from the investment, Russia could not

think of sharing with anyone the fruits of the prosperity which she had created.

We need not go farther into the details of the negotiations. Japan soon convinced herself that the onward march of the Colossus was not to be stopped by paper barricades, and knowing well that her actual military and naval superiority was being rapidly diminished by Russia's warlike preparations, she suddenly broke off diplomatic relations and commenced hostilities.

Russia thus found herself engaged in a war of the first magnitude, of which no one could predict the ultimate consequences, and the question naturally arises as to why, with an Emperor who had aspired to play in politics the part of a great peacemaker, she provoked a conflict, for which she was very imperfectly prepared—imposing on herself the obligation of defending a naval fortress, hastily constructed on foreign territory, and united with her base by a single line of railway 6,000 miles long! The question is easily answered: she did not believe in the possibility of war. The Emperor was firmly resolved that he would not attack Japan, and no one would admit for a moment that Japan could have the audacity to attack the great Russian Empire. In the late autumn of 1903, it is true, a few well-informed officials in St. Petersburg, influenced by the warnings of Baron Rosen, the Russian Minister in Tokio, began to perceive that perhaps Japan would provoke a conflict, but they were convinced that the military and naval preparations already made were quite sufficient to repel the attack. One of these officials—probably the best informed of all—said to me quite frankly: "If Japan had attacked us in May or June, we should have been in a sorry plight, but now (November, 1903) we are ready."

The whole history of territorial expansion in Asia tended to confirm the prevailing illusions. Russia had advanced steadily from the Ural and the Caspian to the Hindu Kush and the Northern Pacific without once encountering serious resistance. Not once had she been called on to make a great national effort, and the armed resistance of the native races had never inflicted on her anything worse than pin-pricks. From decrepit China, which possessed no army in the

European sense of the term, a more energetic resistance was not to be expected. Had not Muraviev Amurski with a few Cossacks quietly occupied her Amur territories (1851-58) without provoking anything more dangerous than a diplomatic protest? Had not Ignatiev annexed her rich Primorsk provinces (1859-61), including the site of Vladivostock, by purely diplomatic means? Why should not Count Cassini, a diplomatist of the same type as Ignatiev, imitate his adroit predecessor and secure for Russia, if not the formal annexation, at least the permanent occupation, of Manchuria? Remembering all this, we can understand why the Russian Government committed its great mistake. It certainly did not want war—far from it—but it wanted to obtain Manchuria by a gradual, painless process of absorption, and it did not perceive that this could not be attained without a life-and-death struggle with a young, vigorous nationality, which has contrived to combine the passions and virtues of a primitive race with the organising powers and scientific appliances of the most advanced civilisation.

The war began on February 6th, 1904, and was for Russia an uninterrupted series of defeats and disasters, but the Japanese were so exhausted by their victorious campaigning that, before a year and a half had passed, they unofficially suggested to the President of the United States that he might intervene as mediator. Mr. Roosevelt adopted the idea, and his mediation was so successful that on August 9th, 1905, the plenipotentiaries of the two belligerent Powers met at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. During the first sittings of the conference the two parties seemed hopelessly irreconcilable. Japan demanded a large war indemnity, the Island of Sakhalin, and a limitation of Russian armaments in the Pacific; and on these three points, which her representatives declared to be essential, Russia replied with an absolute refusal. For three weeks this uncompromising attitude was maintained on both sides, and then suddenly, when the Russian plenipotentiaries were on the eve of their departure, the Japanese unexpectedly withdrew their demands for an indemnity and a limitation of armaments, and consented to a partition of the disputed island. On this basis peace was signed on September 5th, 1905, much to the surprise and

disappointment of the Russian Commander-in-chief in Manchuria and some of the Tsar's most influential advisers, who believed that the tide of fortune was about to turn, and who hoped that the peace negotiations would be wrecked on the indemnity question.*

Russian expansion has thus been checked, for some years, at least, on the Pacific Coast; but the expansive tendency, whose periods of quiescence have never been of long duration, may perhaps soon reappear in other regions. Will it take the form of pacific infiltration in some northern or western portion of the Chinese Empire? Or will it make itself felt in Persia or Afghanistan, in proximity to our Indian frontier? Or will the Government direct it to the Balkan Peninsula and Constantinople, in the hope of stimulating the popular enthusiasm which was conspicuously absent in the Manchurian campaign? To such questions I can give no definite answer, because so much depends on fortuitous circumstances which cannot possibly be foreseen. All I can say with tolerable certainty is that it will seek, as it has done in the past, what seems to be the line of least resistance at the given moment.

* I can testify personally to the surprise of the Russian plenipotentiaries at Japan's sudden change of attitude, for I was in daily communication with them on the spot during the whole course of the negotiations. At the end of the three weeks they had given up all hopes of a pacific solution; and I remember well how M. Witte, the first plenipotentiary, on leaving our hotel for the sitting of the Conference at which the most objectionable of the Japanese claims were withdrawn, gave orders to his servant that everything should be packed up, as he would start for Russia next morning. Two hours later, I was informed that the whole situation was changed, and that peace was practically secured. Subsequently I learned from trustworthy sources that in St. Petersburg the surprise was equally great, and the news not altogether welcome, because certain influential personages had by this time been convinced by the telegrams from Manchuria that a continuation of the war would be for the advantage of Russia.

INDEX

ABDULLAH, Bashkir troubadour, 212
Abercrombie, John, Circassian Scotsman, 256
Abuses, administrative, 384, 543, 581
— judicial administrative, 543, 581, 691
Administration, centralised, 378
— Imperial, and the Commune, 128
— — and the Zemstvo, 566
— — described, 374
— — designed by Peter the Great, 371
— — growth of, 370
— — modern, 389
— municipal, 191
— provincial, Alexander II. and, 558
— territorial, 374
— under Tsars of Muscovy, 371
— (*see also* Bureaucracy)
Administrative abuses, 384, 543, 581
— — judicial, 543, 581, 691
— — laws against, 389
— — remedy for, 389
"Administrative Procedure" in case of political offences, 358
Aehrenthal, Count, 758
Æsthetic literature, 433
Affinity law, 96
Afghanistan, Russian expansion felt in, 759
Agrarian Conservatives and Count Witte, 667
— disturbances, 722
— movement, the revolutionary, 151
— question in the first Duma, 730
Agricultural colleges, necessity for, 555
— progress, 526
— three-field system of, 244
— triennial system of, 101
Agriculture, futile attempt to reform, 347
— improvement of, 544, 554
— in the north, 101
— intensive system of, 554
— primitive system of, 95, 117
— Zemstvo and, 573
Aksákof, Ivan, on Russian Church, 69
Alexander I., 409, 429
— emancipation of serfs attempted by, 474
Alexander II., 317, 359
— accession of, 450
— and provincial administration, 558
— assassination of, by Grinevitski, 649
— attempted assassination of, 621, 647
— attempts to conciliate revolutionists, 647
— emancipation of serfs by, 461, 489, 513
— foreign policy of, 754
— humane policy of, 450
— Poland and, 619
— reform of law courts by, 585
— reforms of, 451, 502, 585
Alexander III., 690
— and rural communes, 130 (*note*)
— character of, 690
— foreign policy of, 754
Alexandrov-Haï, discussion with Molokánye at, 259
Alexeyev, Admiral, 766
Alexis, Tsar, 275
Alien confessions, religious freedom granted to, 708
Anarchists, programmes of, 681
— (*see also* Terrorists and Terrorism)
Anglican Church, 304
Anne, Empress, 421
Anti-agriculturists, 241
Antichrist, Peter the Great regarded as, 277, 406
— Tsar as, 286, 288
Arbiters of the Peace, emancipation officials, 507
Archangel, 749
— Province of, 375
Aristocracy, Noblesse not an, 319
Art, religious, 303
Artél, description of an, 92
— co-operative institution, 668
Artisans, position of, 190
Assemblies, village, since the Emancipation, 541
Assembly, district, 560
— for Province, 581
— provincial, 561
— — of St. Petersburg, 566
— village, 124, 546

Associations, workmen's, 92, 123, 687
Asylums, lunatic, 86
Austria and the Russo-Turkish War, 1877–8, 735
— annexes Bosnia and Herzegovina, 758
Autocracy, evils of, 382
Autonomists, number of, in first Duma, 727
Azov, Sea of, 9

BAADER, 427
Baku, growth of, 183
— disorders at, 705
Bakúnin, anarchist, 626, 681
Balkan Peninsula, expansion in the direction of, 757
Ballot voting amongst peasants a failure, 132
Baltic provinces, disorders in, 719, 722
— Sea, 750
Bank porters' association, 92
Banks, land, 538, 554
— mortgage, government, 524
— peasant, 670
— village, 99
Baron, title of, 320
Barristers on judicial evils, 691
Bashkíria, 207
Bashkirs, Tartar tribe, 208, 209, 221, 225
Baths, communal, 32
— vapour, 32
Batum, disorders at, 705
Batushka, village priest, 51
Bazaars, decay of the, 110
Bekhteyev, M., on serf-emancipation, 518
Bêlaya, Krinitsa, bishopric founded at, 284
Bell, The, journal, 454, 615, 620
Bêlozvorov, false prophet, 264
Berlin, Congress of, 753
Besédy (conversazioni), 106
Bezpopovsti, or Priestless People, 282, 285, 286, 291
Biron, favourite of Duchess of Courland, 421
Black Clergy, 57, 300 (*see also* Clergy)
Black-Earth Zone, estates in the, 518, 521
— results of emancipation in, 535
Black Sea, 751
Blagotchinny, parish priest, 57
Bludov, Count, 585
Bogolubski, Prince, 306
Bolshák, head of the house, 93
Boris Godunóv, Tsar, 462
Bosnia, annexation of, by Austria, 758
Boxer troubles of 1900, 764
Boyárs, landed proprietors, 305
Brandy farmers, tips given by, 381
Bride, a peasant, 96
Bridges, danger of crossing, 15
British merchants in Russia, 200
Buckle's "History of Civilisation," popularity of, 113, 607
Building impossible in winter, 93
Bulgarian atrocities, 754
— colonists, 251
Bulýghin Commission on the Duma, 706
— Constitution, the, 711
Buntari, revolutionaries, 637
Bureau, Russian, 326
Bureaucracy, the, abuses by the officials of, 381, 453
— difficulties of the, 379
— evils of, 379
— hostility to, 355, 691
— law-making by the, 390
— necessity for, 378, 379
— officials of the, 376
— procedure of, 382
— reforms in, 382, 705
— venality of officials of, 440
— Zemstvo and, 566
Burgher element, creation of, 187
Burghers' corporation, 191
Byzantine emperors, 751
— — Tsars as successors of, 307
— factor in foreign policy, 751

CADETS, the (Constitutional Democrats), number of, in first Duma, 726
— in second Duma, 733, 734
— in third Duma, 739
— influence of, in first Duma, 727
— policy of, 728, 734
Camels used for agricultural purposes, 266 (*note*)
Capital punishment, abolished, 583
Capitalism, influence of, on peasant life, 109
Capitalists, foreign, in Russia, 664
Card-playing, prevalence of, 179
Cassini, Count, 767
Catherine II., 299, 313, 409, 490
— and Byzantine empire, 752
— and foreign influence, 424
— and religious converts, 163
— and town-building, 187
— class rights introduced by, 368
— economic policy of, 658
— industrial reforms by, 658
— Noblesse under, 312

Catherine II., religious tolerance of, 279, 286
— serfage under, 472
Cattle, disease in, 536
— leanness of, 102
Cause of the People, revolutionary periodical, 626
Celibacy of Black Clergy, 57 (*see* Clergy)
Census lists first, 125, 757
Chief committee of peasant affairs, 490
China, Russian designs on, 761, 764
Cholera, 75, 82, 85
"Christ's People," religious sect, 288
Church, the, art in, 303
— Eastern Orthodox, 294, 297
— Greek, 65, 294, 297
— impossibility of union of Russian with Anglican, 304
— land secularised, 301
— monasticism in the, 301
— Russian, 273, 297, 302
— — and State, 293
— — and Tsar, 296
— — National, 297
— — Synod of, 368
— — tolerance of, 303 (*see also* Clergy)
Circassian Scotsmen, 256
Class distinction, 365
— hatreds, absence of, 368
— barriers, Peter the Great and, 367
— rights introduced by Catherine II., 368
Classes, recognised by law, 367
— social, 365
Classicism, 430
Clergy, a proletariat of the, 61
— Black, 57, 300
— government and the, 61
— loyalty of, 298
— people's lack of respect for, 58
— power of Black, 300
— Protestant, 64
— — and education, 65
— sons of the, 63
— state grant to parish, 69
— supply of, exceeding demand for, 61
— symptoms of change in condition of, 10
— tolerance of, 68, 303
— unsatisfactory condition of, 51, 59, 62, 69
— White, history of, 60
— (*see also* Priests)
Climate of Far North, 117
Club de la Noblesse, 560
Clubs, workmen's, 704
Code, class statistics from, 366
— criminal, 597
Cold, death from, 23
Colonies, Jewish, 253
— Mennonite, 249, 254
Colonisation, 248
Colonists, Bulgarian, 251
— Cossacks as protectors of the, 237
— foreign, on the Steppe, 247
— government and the, 254
— Greek, 252
— religion amongst the, 255
— Russification of, very slow, 253
Colony, Scottish, 255
Commercial classes, alleged dishonesty of, 198
— crisis in 1900, 665
— morality, 198
— policy of Russia, 755
Committee of workmen's delegates, 720, 724
Communal census lists, 125
— institutions strengthened by emancipation, 513
— land, 97
— — distribution of, 126, 136
— — redistribution of, 128 (*note*), 136, 544, 546
— — rules concerning cultivation of, 140
— — theory of, 505
— — three kinds of, 139
— system, advantages of, 147
— — and revolutionary ideas, 546
— — attempt to reform, 348
— — condemned, 544
— — future of, 546
— taxes, abolition of responsibility for, 124
Commune, the, 120, 465
— absentees remain in, 107, 149
— and Imperial administration, 129
— *Contemporary* adherents and the, 143
— decisions of, 133
— democratic character of, 130
— effect of reforms on, 142
— elections, 134
— female members of, 132
— meetings of, 130
— powers of, 124, 133
— Proletariat and, 144
— rural, 120, 130 (*note*), 463
— Speaker in, 131
— the, constitution of, 123
— the Slavophils and the, 143
— theory of, 125
— Tsars and the 130 (*note*), 407
— voting in, 132

Comte, Auguste, influence of, 607
Conscription, 240
Conservatives, 363, 442, 455, 456, 667
— in the first Duma, 727
Consistorial Council, 300
Consistory of the Province, 57, 60
Constantine, Grand Duke, 491, 513, 619
Constantinople, 233, 295, 751
Constitution, desire for, 359, 363, 493, 691
— granted, 1905, 710
Constitutional Democrats (*see* Cadets)
Contemporary, The, Russian periodical, 143
— adherents of, suspended temporarily, 609, 716
Convicts, punishment of, 584
Co-operative institutions, 668
Coronation of Nicholas II., 399
Corporal punishment for defaulting taxpayers, 100
Cossack rising, 471, 637, 673
Cossacks, the, 233
— agriculture by Don, prohibited, 241
— "Beating the Bounds" by, 244
— Dnieper, the, 236
— Don, the, 8, 237, 239, 241
— free, 235, 237
— independence of, lost, 236
— land distributed amongst, 243
— life of Don, in olden times, 241
— modern, 239
— organisation of, in 1873, 240
— Ural, the, 237, 239
— Volga, the, 237
Cotton trade, growth of, 659, 661
Council of state, 374
— Privy, abolition of, 377
Count, title of, 320
Counter-revolutionary movement, 1905, 715
Courland, Duchess of, 322, 420
Courts, criminal, 588
— district, 342
— Justice of the Peace, 586
— — defects in, 595
— — popularity of, 592
— — reform of, 595
— New Law, 586
— of appeal, 588
— Old Law, 581
— old police, 593
— ordinary, 588
— (*see also* Law Courts)
Crimea, Khan of the, 233
Crimean slave trade, 233
— War and its consequences, 437
Crimean War, dissatisfaction after, 444
— — humiliation after, 444
— — optimism of Russia before, 442
— — pamphlets issued during, 445
— — reform enthusiasm after, 444, 690
Criminal code, 597
Cronstadt, mutiny at, in 1905, 717
Curatorships, voluntary, 70
Cutlery industry, 109

DE MAISTRE, 427
Debtors, treatment of, 99
"December Catastrophe" of 1825, 428, 437
Decorations, traffic in, 196
Degaiev, revolutionist, 650
Deutsch, Leo, revolutionist, 650
Devier, Count, 310
Disease, old conceptions of, 85
— on the Sheksná, 75
Dissenters, Catherine II. and, 279
— celibacy amongst, 287
— creed of, 280, 282, 285
— distinct from heretics, 273
— excommunicated, 276
— marriage amongst, 287
— organisation of, 280, 282, 285
— Peter the Great and, 277
— schism amongst, 282
District assembly, 560
— courts, 342
— towns, 190
Districts, subdivision of Provinces, 374
Dmitri of the Don, 295 (*note*), 306
Dnieper, Zaporovians of the, 236
Dobrolubov, 624
Doctor, interview with a, 72
Doctors, 86
Dolgoroukov, Prince, 710
Domestic serfs, the, 143, 485
— — Emancipation and, 504
— slaves, 143, 485, 504
Don, Cossacks of the, 8, 237, 239, 241
— navigation of the, 7
— steamers, insects on board the, 8
Drama, 431
Drenteln, General, assassination of, 645
Dukhobortsi (Russian Quakers), 263
Duma, the, 544
— institution of, 710
— first, composition of, 726
— — dissolution of, 731
— — failure of, 733
— — influence of cadets in, 727
— — opening of, 725

Duma, first, political tendencies of, 726
— — story of, 727
— Nicholas II. proposes to convene a, 706
— second, composition of, 733
— — dissolution of, 736
— — failure of, 736
— — opening of, 732
— — Social Democrats indicted in, 736
— — story of, 733
— third, compared with previous Dumas, 737
— — elected by revised electorate, 737
— — general character of, 738
— — legislative usefulness of, 740
Durnovó, M., 725
Dvoróvuye, domestic slaves, 143, 485, 504
Dvoryánskaya Opéka, Russian bureau, 326

EAST, Far, the, Russian designs on, 758
Easter ceremonies in Moscow, 396
Eastern Orthodox Church, 294
— Question, 757
— — Slavophils and, 415
Education among the Tartars, 165
— effect of, upon morality, 539
— Protestant clergy and, 65
Educational system, reforms in, 623, 625
Ekaterinoslav, growth of, 183
Election law, modifications in, 737
Electors, official pressure on, 727
Elizabeth, Princess, 421
Emancipated peasantry, 528
Emancipation of serfs, 12, 79, 489
— Alexander I. and, 474
— Alexander II. and, 461, 489, 513
— by whom effected, 513
— effect on class distinctions, 309
— — of, on manufacturing industry, 660
— — of the, upon peasantry, 79, 99, 528
— — of, upon proprietors, 515
— — of, upon provincial administration, 558
— — on Commune, 142
— — on servants, 79
— German's view of, 40
— government scheme for, 495
— law of, 500, 504
— literature and, 353
— marriage of serfs allowed by the, 79
Emancipation of serfs, Nicholas I. and, 474
— Noblesse and, 489, 493, 502, 506
— number of serfs at the, 503, 513, 517
— peasantry disappointed with, 41, 504
— press and the, 492, 515
— proprietors since, 515
— prosperity of people since, 533
— provincial committees on, 495, 498
— settlement of difficulties of, 508
— Slavophils and, 414
Emigration of the peasantry, 184
Émigrés, revolutionary, 626
Engineers' Mutual Aid Society, 687
Epoch of the Restoration, 428
Estates, classification of, 477
European influence on Russia, 312, 317, 407, 411, 420
— Russia, area of, 552
— — bird's-eye view of, 27
Exports of grain, 526

FACTORIES, effect of, upon home industries, 531, 569
— growth of, 111
Factory inspectors, 111
— legislation, 112, 686, 724
Fairs, 109
Family life among peasantry, 88, 97
Far East, the, Russian designs on, 758
— North, climate of, 117
Fasts of the peasantry, 104
"Feldsher," 86
— interview with a, 72
Fêtes, parish, 103
Filipov, Vera, revolutionist, 650
Finnish aborigines, Russification of, 154, 166
— tribes, moroseness of, 6
— villages, 152
Finns, religion of, 156
— number of, 154
Fishing in Far North, 119
Folklore, 119
Food, decrease of production of, 526, 536
— in Northern Russia, 34
— increasing surplus of, 553
— of peasantry, 34, 104
Foreign influence, 312, 317, 407, 411, 420
— — hostility to, during Napoleonic wars, 426
— — reaction against, 408
— policy, 443
— — Byzantine factor in, 751
— — territorial expansion and, 743

Foreign trade statistics, 553
Forests, 105, 553, 745
Fredericksham, Treaty of, 750
Free Cossacks, 749
— Trade, 755
— — Protection *v.*, 660
French influence on Russia, 313, 407, 441
— Revolution, effect of, on Russia, 426
— — of 1848, 435
Fugitives, peasant, 466, 470, 483
— religious sect, 289

GAPON, Father, 694
— — and the Democrats, 697
— assassination of, 703
— in exile, 702
— flight of, 702
— leads procession on "Red Sunday," 702
— petition of, to the Tsar, 698, 700
— Witte's opinion of, 704
Gendarmerie, formation of, 384
— present day, 385
— reconstruction of, 385
Generals common in Russia, 329
Genghis Khan, 294
— — character of, 227
— — empire of, 226, 227
— — policy of, 227
Georgia, armed rising in, 705
German colonists, 247
— influence, 420, 427
— merchants in Russia, 200
Germany seizes Kiaochau, 763
Gógol, author, 353, 433
Gold currency, introduction of, 663
Golden Horde, the, 228
— — founder of the, 228
— — policy of the Khans of the, 292
Goremýkin, M., appointed Prime Minister, 725
— replaced by M. Stolýpin, 732
Gostinny Dvor or Bazaar, 182
Government towns, 189
— provinces, 374
Governors, provincial, powers and duties of, 375
Grain production and export, 526
Grand Princes of Muscovy (*see* Muscovy)
Great Russian, The, periodical, 609
Greek colonists, 252
— Orthodox Church (*see* Church, Eastern Orthodox)
Grigoriev, Ivan, false prophet, 265
Grigoróvitch, the novelist, 76
Grinevitski, assassination of Alexander II. by, 649
Grodno, police strike at, 719
Guests' court, 182
Gun-making, introduction of, in fifteenth century, 655

HALTURIN, revolutionist, 647
Hannibal, Commander-in-Chief, 310
Harvest festivals, 103
Hegelian theory of universal history, 408
Heretics, among the, 258
— future of, 270
— police and, 280
Hermitage, St. Petersburg, 418
Herzegovina, annexation of, by Austria, 758
Herzegovinian insurrection, 1875, 753
Herzen, M., 620
Hospitality in Russia, 323
Hospitals, public, 85
Hotel accommodation, 10-13
Hughes, John, ironworker, 661, 664
Hungarian insurrection, suppression of, 435
Hunting in Far North, 119

IBERIAN Madonna, 402
— domiciliary visits of, 64, 402
Ibn Batuta, 228
Icon, Kazan, 68
Icon-painting at Vladimir, 109
Icons, description of, 66
— miraculous, 67
— significance of, 67
— simple, 67
— Synods and, 67
Ignatiev, 764
Illegals, professional revolutionists, 628
Illegitimates, position of, 95
Imperial administration (*see* Administration)
India, Russian policy and, 760
Individualism, 496
Industrial progress and the Proletariat, 655
— — effect of, on revolutionary movement, 672
— reforms of Peter the Great, 656
Industries, home, 108
— — assisted by Zemstvo, 567
— — killed by big factories, 531, 569
— — M. Witte and, 662
Industry, cotton, 659, 66
— introduction of, 655
— iron, failures in, 665
— — progress of, 656, 661

Industry, manufacturing, 657
— — development of, 554
— mineral, progress of, 661
— village, 108
— woollen, 657
Inheritance, law of, 95
Inspectors, sanitary, 111
— factory, 111
Inventories, institution of, 491
Irkutsk, mutiny at, in 1905, 720
Iron industry, 656, 661, 665
Ishútin, M., revolutionary leader, 621
Ivan III., 655
— creation of Tsardom of Muscovy by, 756
"Ivan the Great," bell in, Muscow, 396
Ivan the Terrible, 233, 747
Ivánovka, author's arrival at, 35
— — life at, 48
— communal law at, 101
— description of, 37
— history of, 37
— parish priest at, 35, 48
Ivanovo, revolutionary agitators in, 629
Ivanof's picture, 396

JAPAN and Korea, 762
— negotiations with Russia, 762, 765
— peace signed, 712
— Russian coalition against, 762
— warlike preparations of, 765
Japanese war and its consequences, 689
— — effect of, on public, 708
— — — on Russian expansion, 770
— — outbreak of, 689, 762, 768
— — terrorism during, 691
— — Treaty of Portsmouth concluding, 712, 769
— — unpopularity of, 690
Jewish colonists, 253
Jews, persecution of the, by reactionaries, 716
— religious freedom granted, 708
Joint-stock companies, creation of, 400
Judges, character of, 583
— corruption of, 581, 583
— election of, 582
— peasant, 542
Judicial administration, abuses of, 543, 581, 691
— procedure, 580
Juges d'Instruction, 591
Jumpers, heretical sect, 269
Jung-Stilling, 427
Jury, acquittal of proved criminals by, 598
Jury, and the Criminal Code, 597
— introduction of trial by, 596
— peculiarities of peasant, 600
Justice (*see* Law Courts)
— of Peace Courts, 586
— — a German's view of the, 42
— — popularity of, 592
— — session of, procedure at, 42

KAFFA, slave trade in, 234, 236
Kalka, river, 224
Kalmyks, pastoral tribe, 219, 221
Karakózov, attempt of, to assassinate Alexander II., 621
Karalýk, river, 210
Karamzin, Russian historian, 76, 409
Katkov, M., Editor of *Moscow Gazette*, 620
Kazan, 5
— Icon of, 68
Kem, 119
Khan Kuyuk, Grand, 229
Khans of the Golden Horde, policy of, 229
Kharkov, 177, 645
Khlysti, heretical sect, 268
Khodinskoye Polye, catastrophe on, 402
Khozaín, head of house, 93
Khrustalév, M., leader of revolutionaries, 711, 717
Kiaochau, seized by Germany, 763
Kiev, 177, 394, 637, 645, 720
Kirghiz, pastoral tribe, 217, 221, 225
Knoop, Ludwig, cotton importer, 659
Knout, castigation with the, 583
Knyaz, title of, 320
Kola, 119
Kólokol, revolutionary paper, 454, 615, 620
Korea, 760
— Japan and, 762
— Russia and, 761
Korff, Baron, 584
Krapotkin, Prince, 634
— — assassination of, 645
Kremlin, Moscow, 395
— — coronation of Nicholas II. at, 399
Krüdener, Frau von, 427
Kumyss, beverage, 203, 211
Kushk, railway to, 760

LABOUR deputies addressed by Count Witte, 718
— — arrest of, 724
— dues of the serfs, 477, 512
— emancipation group, 674
— members in the first Duma, 227

Labour movement, 676
Laissez faire, 496
Lamsdorff, Count, 766
Land bank, peasant, 538, 554
— communal (*see* Communal Land)
— distribution of, amongst Don Cossacks, 243
— government and redistribution of, 546
— reclaiming of waste, 552
— tenure, communal system of, condemned, 544
— — system of, 139
Landed proprietors (*see* Proprietors)
Lands, church, secularised, 301
Language, difficulty of learning the, 46
— knowledge of the, necessary for travelling, 21
— of peasants, 21
Lavróv, Socialist, 628
Law courts, the, Alexander II. and the reform of, 585
— — new, 586
— — — independence of, 604
— — — — political significance of, 604
— — Nicholas I. and corruption in the, 584
— — old, evils of, 581
— — — procedure at, 583
— — ordinary, 588
— — reform of, 581, 585
— — scale of punishments, 583
— of inheritance, 95
Laws made by bureaucracy, 390
Lermontov, poet, 353, 431
Lettish peasantry, disorders by, 719
Libau, growth of, 183
Liberals, 706
— agitate for representative institutions, 359, 363
— aims of, 442, 457
— and Polish insurrection, 619
— and revolutionists, 639
Limited liability companies, creation of, 460
Lipetsk, 646
Literature and social reform, 435
— classicism in, 430
— manuscript, 445
— romantic, 441
— Russian, 76, 353, 423, 425, 430, 435
— — æsthetic, 433
— — influence of sentimental school on, 425, 445
Lithuanian provinces, disorders in, 708
— — emancipation in the, 491
Litvani, Michalonis, on Crimean slave trade, 233
Live stock, decrease in, 536
Livonian Order, 750
Local government (*see* Zemstvo)
— ecclesiastical administration, 299
Lodz, growth of, 184
— industrial rival to Moscow, 660
Lunatic asylums, 86
Lystars, military community, 237

MADONNA, Iberian, domiciliary visits of, 402
Mahometans contrasted with Tartars, 160
— rarely converted to Christianity 163
Makarii, Bishop, 295 (*note*)
Manchuria, 760
Manufacturers, concessions to, 657
Manufacturing districts, life in, 111
— industry, 657
— — development of, 554
Manure, 118, 545
Marriage, 287
— affinity, 96
— — allowed to serfs by Emancipation, 79
— amongst peasantry, 95
Marshals of Noblesse, 570
Marlinski, author, 431
Marx, Karl, discoveries of, in economic science, 675
Masha, magical medical practitioner 81
Máslov, revolutionist, 650
Masquerading, practice of, 33
Match factory, 112
Medical science, two stages of, 82
Medicine and witchcraft, 81
Mehemet Zián, Tartar, 213
Mélikov, Count, 385, 648
Melnikof, Mr., 60
Mennonite (religious sect) colonies 249, 254
Ménshikov, Prince, 310
Mercantile classes, the towns and, 182
Merchant, home of rich, 192
Merchants, British, 200
— as jurymen, 603
— decorations desired by, 196
— dishonesty of, 197
— German, 200
— ignorance of, 197
— love of ostentation, 194
— *position of, in towns, 190*
— progress of the, 192
— signs of change in condition of the, 198, 200

Metternich, Count, 427
Mezentsev, General, assassination of, 645, 653
Migrations, 167, 551
— of people during Dark Ages, 154
Military service, introduction of universal, 240
Mill, John Stuart, popularity of, in Russia, 607
Milútin, Nicholas, 615 (*note*)
Mineral industries, progress of, 661
Ministers, committee of, 374
— number of, 374
Mir, the, or village community, 120 (*see also* Commune)
Mirski, Prince Sviatopolk, 691, 697
Mistislaf, Prince, of Galicia, 223
Molokánye, religious sect, 161, 258
— disaffection amongst, 272
— history of the, 263
— mission to, at Samara, 271
— susceptible to German influence, 249
— theology of the, 260, 265
Monasteries, 57, 229
Monastery, Theodosian, at Moscow, 286
Monasticism, 301
Mongol domination, the, 223
— — effect of, on Russia, 231
— — Noblesse under, 306
— government, system of, 228
Mongols, the characteristics of, 225
— distinction between Tartars and, 223, 225
— language of, 226
— policy of the, 228 (*see also* Tartars)
— religious tolerance of the, 229
Morality, commercial, 198
Morózov, Sava, industrial magnate, 659
Mortgage banks, 524
Moscow, buildings of, 396
— commercial prosperity of, 404
— congress of reformers, 1905, 709
— conservatism of, 413
— coronation of Nicholas II., 399
— Easter Eve in, 396
— *Gazette*, 620
— growth of, 194
— hostility to bureaucracy in, 694
— objects of interest in, 395
— patriarchate of, instituted, 295
— peasants' union at, 719
— Province, peasantry in, 537
— railway from St. Petersburg to, 2
— serfage radiated from, 476
— Slavophilism received in, 394, 413
— Slavophils and Nihilism, 620
Moscow, street lighting in, 183
— streets, of, 403
— Theodosian monastery at, 286
— workmen's association in, 687
— Zemstvo of, 575
Municipal organisation, 190
— administration, 191
— reforms, 191
Muraviev, 620
Murman coast, 119
Muroli, Venetian artificer, 655
Muscovy, Grand Prince of, 186, 749, 752
— — — attitude of, towards Golden Horde, 231
— — — territorial expansion by, 233
— Tsar of, first, 233
— — and Turkey, 233
— Tsardom of, created, 756
Muzhiks (*see* Peasants)

NAIL-MAKING in Uloma, 109
— Tver, 109
"Name-days," festivities on, 339
Names in Russia, 39
Naming priests, custom of, 51
Narodnaya Volya, revolutionary group, 639, 640, 648 (*note*), 649, 672
Narodnoye Dyelo, Socialist paper, 626
Narodovoltsi, 639
National Assembly, desire for a, 707
Nazimof, the Rescript to, 491
Nesselrode, Count, 448 (*note*)
Neva, river, 4, 417
Nevski engineering works, strike at, 676
Nicholas I. and abuses of judicial administration, 584
— and administrative abuses, 384
— and voting by ballot, 132
— anecdote of, 398
— character of, 437
— emancipation of serfs, considered under, 474
— maps the railway from St. Petersburg to Moscow, 2–3
— number of factory hands during reign of, 658
— repressive measures of, 78, 429, 437
— system of, 440
Nicholas II. accepts Count Witte's lenient policy, 713
— and popular discontent, 693
— and congress of Zemstvos, 709
— autocracy upheld by, 690
— coronation of, 399
— Father Gapon and, 701

Nicholas II., grants constitution, 710
— manifesto of, in 1905, 705
— ukaz of 1904, 693
Nihilism, 45
— alarms the government, 609
— decline of, 624
— defence of, by M. Pissarev, 611
— press and, 615
— proprietors and, 618
— reactionary tendencies against, 619
— repressive measures against, 609, 616
— revolutionary, origin of, 605
— Slavophils and, 621
— students and, 622
— theory of, 621
Nihilist, invention of the term, 611
Nihilists, 672
— energy of lady, 625
Nikon, Patriarch, and ceremonial reform, 275, 281
Nizhni-Novgorod Fair, 4, 7
— — industries round, 109
— — Zemstvo of, 574
Noblesse, the, 305
— aristocrat feeling missing among, 314, 319
— differentiation between, and other classes, 317
— dissatisfaction among, 311
— emancipation and the, 489, 493, 502, 506
— expropriation of the, 525
— foreign influence and, 424
— French influence on, 313
— future of the, 321
— highest order of, 364
— Club de la, 560
— obligatory service of the, abolished, 312, 471
— peasantry contrasted to, 248
— politically uninfluential in eighteenth century, 315
— precedence among, 308
— under Catherine II., 312
— under Mongol domination, 306
— under Paul I., 316
— — Peter the Great, 309, 523
— — Romanov family, 308
— — Tsardom of Muscovy, 307
— wealth of the, 320, 475
— Western culture and, 312, 317
— (*see also* Proprietors)
Nogaï Tartars, pastoral tribe, 220
Nomads, 217, 221, 748, 752
Nonconformists (*see* Dissenters)
Normans from Scandinavia, 172
North, Far, climate of, 117
Northern agricultural zone, 521, 545
— forests, the, 27
Novgorod, description of, 170
— history of, 171
— life in, 177
— monument at, 171
— provincial assembly, 181
— Zemstvo at, 559

"OBROK," serfs on, 477
Octobrists, 738
Odessa, growth of, 184
Odóevski, Prince, on Western Europe, 410
Official procedure, complicated, 382
Officials and the bureaucratic machine, 376
— Imperial administration and the, 370
— peculation of, 453
— venality of, 380, 440
Old Ritualists, 282, 290
— — government and, 291
— — religious freedom granted, 708
Onega, Lake, Paleostrovski Monastery on islet in, 277
— — religious community near, 285
Orenburg-Tashkent Railway, 759
Orlov-Davydov, Count, 321
Ozerki, Gapon's body found at, 703

PAGANISM, a survival of, 83
Paláti, description of, 31
Paleostrovski Monastery, 277
Panslavist aspirations, 414 (*see also* Slavophils)
— school, 752
Papacy, Russian Church and, 293
Paris Revolution, 1848, 435
Parish fêtes, 103
Parliamentary institution, desire for a, 359, 363 (*see also* Duma)
Pastoral tribes of the Steppe, 200
Patriarchal conception of family life, 308
Patriarchate of Moscow instituted, 295
— — abolished, 296
"Patriarchs' Treasury," Moscow, 395
Patronymics in Russia, 39
Paul I., Noblesse under, 316
Paul III., 473, 475, 477, 760
— and serfs, 477
Pavlovo, cutlery making at, 109
Peasant affairs, chief committee for, 490
— bank, 670
— empire, ideal of a, 360

Peasant families, effect of Emancipation upon, 550
— household, 88, 123
— — expenses, 97
— judges, 542
— jury, peculiarities of a, 600
— land bank, 538, 554
Peasantry, 463
— agriculture, among, 101
— bravery of, 85
— cholera amongst, 85
— clergy and the, 58
— communal land of, 97
— — — and, 126
— communicativeness of, 6
— community of things, 98
— credulity of, 83
— demonstration of the, 539
— disaffection of the, 722
— disappointment of, at the Emancipation, 41, 504
— doctors ill-treated by, 83
— drunkenness of the, 539
— economics of the, 94
— effect of Emancipation on, 79, 99, 528
— emigration of, 184
— enterprise amongst, 114
— family life among, 97
— — life of, 123
— far northern, 117
— fasts of the, 104
— field work of, 93
— food of, 34, 104
— formation of hybrid class, 149
— fugitivism among, 466, 470, 483
— improvement of, 573
— influence of capitalism on, 109
— inheritance, law of, not known to, 95
— intelligence of Northern, 112
— laziness of, 540
— life of the, 88, 101
— lying in self-defence, 205
— marriages of, 79, 95
— Noblesse contrasted with, 248
— northern, 101
— numerical strength of, 475
— occupations of, 117
— power of withstanding heat and cold, 32
— reform in condition of the, 708
— religion of, 63
— sale of, 469, 472, 486
— self-government by the, 541
— serfage of the, 469
— superstition of, 82
— taxation of, 469, 547
— winter occupations of, 105
Peasants, dishonesty of, 522
— proprietors efforts to retain, 405
— state, 112, 132, 475
— union, 719, 724
Penjdeh incident, 759
Periodicals, monthly, 180
Perjury, common amongst peasantry, 206
Perovski, Sophia, 648, 650
Persia, Russian policy and, 758
Peter the Great, Antichrist, 277, 406
— — character of, 419
— — class barriers strengthened by, 367
— — creates burgher element, 187
— — Dissenters and, 277
— — Empire at time of, 756
— — founding of St. Petersburg by, 419
— — Imperial administration designed by, 371
— — industrial reforms of, 656
— — intellectual movement inaugurated by, 419
— — Noblesse under, 309, 523
— — persecutions during reign of, 278
— — policy of, 750
— — poll-tax imposed by, 469
— — reforms of, 278, 418
— — serfage under, 469
— — Slavophils opposed to, 411
— — wooden house of, at St. Petersburg, 418
Peter III. abolishes obligatory service of Noblesse, 471
— assassination of, 471
— reforms of, 469
Philipists, religious sect, 288
Pilgrim serfs, 484
Pinsk swamps, drainage of, 552
Pissarev, M., Nihilist author, 611, 624
Plague, Siberian, 75
Plehve, M., 688
— assassination of, 686, 691
— contrasted with Count Witte, 669
— policy of, 670
— repressive measures of, 691
Plekhánov, M., revolutionologist author, 674
Pobêdonostsev, M., attempted assassination of, 686
Podorozhanaya, description of a, 18
Pogódin, historian, opposes street lighting, 183
Pogróms, 716, 717
Poland, Alexander II. and autonomy for, 619
— dismemberment of, 750

Poland, disorders in, 1708, 717
— former expansion of, 749
— insurrection of 1863, 619
Polênof, M., on decrease of food, 536
Police and heretics, 281
— courts, old, 593
— terror under Nicholas I., 78
Political life, 366
— offenders, modes of dealing with, 358
— parties, 356
Politics, indifference of Russians to, 440
Poll-tax, imposed by Peter the Great, 469
Pomórtsi, 286, 287
Population, 462, 475
— density of, 551
— in 1910, 184
— increase of, 184, 550, 756
— migration of, 551
— of towns, 183
Port Arthur, 689
— — leased to Russia, 763
Portsmouth (U.S.A.), treaty of, 712, 769
Positivism, influence of, 607
Post organisation, Imperial, 18
Post-stations, 18, 19, 24
Pravezh, Tartar punishment, 176
Press and Emancipation, 492, 515
— — Nihilism, 615
— bureaucracy and the, 355
— — censure, 357, 427
— revolutionary, 454, 608, 626
— supervision of, 435, 438
— under Alexander II., 453
"Priestless People," the, 282, 285
— — schism amongst, 286
— — government and, 291
Priests, 539
— contrasted with Protestant pastors, 64
— custom of naming, 51
— education and, 65
— marriage of, 53
— parish, 57
— unsatisfactory condition of village, 51, 59, 62
— (*see also* Clergy)
Prince, title of, 320
Prince Potomkin, mutiny on, in 1905, 708
Princes of Moscow (*see* Muscovy)
— of Russia, early, 229
Printing introduced, 275
Procureur, power of, 298
Proletariat, a clerical, 61
— and the Commune, 144
Proletariat, fear of the, 144, 497
— increasing, 120
— industrial progress and the, 655
Property, distribution of, 95
Proprietors, 305
— and Nihilism, 618
— cruelties of, towards serfs, 473
— domestic servants of the, 485
— efforts of, to retain peasants, 465
— family life of serfs controlled by, 97
— hospitality of, 323
— modern school of, 345
— number of deposed, 488
— old school of, 323
— oppression of the serfs by the, 479
— since the Emancipation, 515
— wealth of the, 320, 475
— (*see also* Noblesse)
Protection, 657, 660, 662, 755
Protestant pastor contrasted with Russian priest, 64
Protestantism; 255
Provincial assembly, 561
— — of St. Petersburg, 566
— committees on emancipation, 495, 498
— administration, Alexander II. and, 558
— life, dullness of, 181
— society, 177
— towns, 182
Provinces, government, 374
Pruth, author delayed at the, 386
Pugatchév, Cossack rising under, 471, 637, 673
Punishment, barbarous, 583
— capital, abolished, 583
— corporal, for defaulting taxpayers, 100
— of convicts, 584
Punishments, scale of, 583
Purification, rites of, 33
Pushkin, author, 353, 427, 431
Putilov ironworks, strike at, 695

RACES, variety of, in Southern Russia, 246
Railway connecting the Volga with the Don, 7
— from St. Petersburg to Moscow, 2
— Orenburg-Tashkent, 759
— Trans-Siberian, 1, 760, 762
Railways, development of, 2–4
— distance of stations from the town, 1
— improvement in, 1
— State organisation of, 3
Ralston, Mr., 119

Raskól schism, 279
Rates, the increase of, since creation of Zemstvo, 570
Rats on board Azov steamers, 9
Reactionaries, 724
— in the first Duma, 727
Redistribution of land (*see* Communal Land)
" Red Sunday," 694, 702
— — influence of, on populace, 704
Reformers, Count Witte and the, 713
Reforms after Crimean War, 444, 690
— effect of enthusiasm for, 604
— municipal, 191
— of Alexander II., 451, 502, 585
— of Catherine II., 658
— of Peter the Great, 278, 418
Regular tribunals, 586, 588, 596
Religion, 58, 273, 274, 402
— amongst the colonists, 255
— government's attitude regarding, 162
— and morality, 64
— of Finns, 156
— of peasantry, 63
Religious art, 303
— fanaticism, absence of, 166
— tolerance, 68, 160, 229, 279, 286, 708
Rescript, the, to Nazimof, 491
Restoration, epoch of the, 428
Revision lists, 125
Revolution, French, effect of, on Russia, 425
— — of 1848, 435
Revolutionaries, Socialist, 684
Revolutionary agitation, 1875, 629
— — of 1848, 435
— — of 1861, 617
— demonstrations, 1905, 715
— fever rampant in 1905, 717
— ideas, Communal system and, 546
— literature, 674
— movement, aim and plan of, 680
— — counter, 1906, 715
— — effect of industrial progress on, 672
— — new phase of, 670
— — stages of, 672
— pamphlets, 629
— press, 653
— Social Democrats, 679
Revolutionists adopt Terrorist policy, 639
— Alexander II. and, 647
— congress, 1879, 646
— reception of Duma by, 711
— repressive measures against, 647
— revenge of, on Gapon, 703
— Witte's lenient policy with, 713
Riazán, Zemstvo of, 576
Rights, Bill of, 368
Rites, importance of, 273
— of purification, 33
Ritualists, Old, the, 282, 290
— — government and, 291
— — religious freedom granted, 708
Rivers, travelling on, 4
Roads, badness of, 14, 16, 572
— difficulties of repairing, 16
— Zemstvo and the building of, 572, 574
Romanticism, 430, 441
Roosevelt, Mr. Theodore, acts as mediator between Russia and Japan, 769
Rosen, Baron, 768
Rostov-on-the-Don, strikes at, 680
Rural Communes, 120, 463
— — Alexander III. and, 130 (*note*)
— population, three classes of, 462
— supervisors, 543, 546, 595
Rurik, ruler of Novgorod, 171
Rūs tribe, 171
Russia, black country of, 661
— coalition formed by, against Japan, 762
— commercial policy of, 755
— European, area of, 552
— — bird's eye view of, 27
— Far North, 117
— foreign influence on, 312, 317, 407, 411, 420
— foreign policy of, 443, 743, 751
— French influence in, 422
— geographical and political conditions of, 184
— growth of, 742
— hotels in, 10
— industrial position of, 662
— influence of Western Europe on, 312
— intellectual development of, 420
— negotiations of, with Japan, 762, 765
— outbreak of war between, and Japan, 689, 762, 768
— Papacy and, 293
— population of, 183, 184, 462, 475, 550, 551, 756
— press in, 453
— protection in, 657, 660, 662, 755
— relations of, with Constantinople, 751
— rural population of, 462
— seaward expansion of, 750, 757
— secret societies in, 428, 609, 621, 677
— slavery in, 463

Russia, Southern, variety of races in, 246
— territorial expansion of, 743
— transitional state of industries in, 111
— Turkish war, 753
— Young, 427
Russian burgher element, 189
— Church, 297, 302
— — and ceremony, 273
— — and State, 293
— civilisation a strange conglomeration, 87
— Empire, founders of, 172
— — growth of, 756
— commercial morality, 198
— hospitality, 323
— hostility to foreign influence during Napoleonic wars, 246
— ideals, 409
— indifference to politics, 440
— intercourse with Europe begun, 749
— life, old, 394
— literature, 76, 353, 423, 425, 430, 435, 445
— patriarchate, abolition of, 296
— right, legal document, 367
— scenery in, 4
— society, transitional state of, 150
— titles, value of, 320
Russians a religious people, 65
— linguistic talents of, 48

St. Barbara, supposed apparition of, 83
St. Isaac's Cathedral, 418
St. Peter and St. Paul, fortress of, 418
St. Petersburg, court of, under Catherine II., 313
— description of, 417
— enthusiasm in, at Count Witte's policy, 714
— European influence and, 417
— general strike of workmen, 1905, 717
— growth of, 184
— insurrection of 1825 in, 437
— — in, 428
— provincial assembly at, 561
— railway from, to Moscow, 2–3
— reason for founding, 419
— Slavophilism a failure in, 413
— strikes at, in 1905, 712, 717
— — in 1896, 678
— unrest in, in 1905, 695
— workmen's organisation at, 698
Sakharov, General, assassination of, 719
Samára, description of, 202
— Molokánye at, 271
Samovar, a "self-boiler," 13
Samovólnaya Ivánovka, origin of, 204
Sanitary inspectors, 111
San Stefano, Treaty of, 753
Sarátov, disorders at, 719
Savings banks, 538
"Saviours of the Fatherland," 555
Scandinavia, Normans of, in Russia, 172
Schism (*see* Dissenters)
Schwanebach, M., on taxation of peasants, 548
Science and the revolutionary agitation, 622
Scottish colony, a, 255
Sebastopol, 437
— military riots at, in 1905, 708
— mutiny at, in 1905, 720
Secret societies, 428, 609, 621, 677
Sectarianism, government and, 269
— political feelings of, 292
— (*see also* Dissenters)
Sects, heretical, among the, 258
— — classification of, 267
— — future of, 270
— — numerical strength of the, 291
— — political feelings of, 292
Seizure-right, 718, 721
Self-government, local, and the Zemstvo, 558
— — municipal, 188
— — of the peasantry, 541
Sentimental school, 425
Serfage, agricultural nature of, 476
— bearing on scarcity of large towns, 185
— development of, 473
— disadvantages of abolition of, 549
— estates under, 549
— in the north, 476
— in the south, 476
— justification of, 470
— origin of, 463
— radiated from Moscow, 476
— under Catherine II., 472
— — Paul III., 473
— — Peter the Great, 469
Serfs, the, 462
— Church and, 301
— compelled to live in large families, 97
— condition of the, 336, 473, 478
— cruelties to, 473
— domestic, 143, 485
— — Emancipation and the, 504
— dues paid by, 477, 512
— emancipation of (*see* Emancipation)

Serfs, fugitive, 466, 470, 483
— geographical distribution of, 476
— insurrections of the, 484
— labour dues of, 477, 512
— number of, 475
— — emancipated, 503, 513, 517
— oppressors of the, 479
— pilgrim, 484
— punishment of, 481
— sale of, 469, 472, 486
— transportation of the unruly, 341 (*note*)
Seraï, founding of, 228
Serge, Grand Duke, assassination of, 686, 705
Shafirov, Baron, 310
Sheep, decrease in, 536
Sheremetyev, Count, 659
Sheviryév, conspiracy of, 652
"Shto delat'?" novel, 609
Siberia, best men banished to, 457 (*note*)
— pioneer colonists in, 551
Sineus, chieftain of Rūs tribe, 171
"Sinless revenues," 380
Sipiágin, M., assassination of, 686
Skoptsi sect, 268
Slav and Teutonic languages compared, 46
Slavery, 233, 234, 236, 486
Slavophil sentiment, 406
Slavophilism, failure of, in St. Petersburg, 413
— reception of, in Moscow, 413
Slavophils, 143, 752
— aim of, 410
— and Eastern Question, 415
— and Nihilism, 620
— and Peter the Great, 411
— doctrine of, 406
— emancipation of serfs, and, 414
— foreign culture condemned by, 412
— history of the, 405
— modern, 415
— Moscow and, 394, 413
— Panslavist aspirations of, 414
Small-pox, black, 75
Smolensk, 533
Snow cure for frost-bite, 23
Social classes, 365
— — recognised by law, 367
— — statistics of, 366
— Democrats, activity of, in 1905, 696
— — aim at Socialist Republic, 704
— — and Gapon, 697
— — and the Japanese war, 696
— — attitude of, towards terrorism, 686
Social Democrats, congress of, 1900, 679
— — government and, 687
— — indictment of, by Stolýpin, 736
— — in the second Duma, 733
— — labour and the, 676
— — plan general political strike, 1905, 711
— — proclaim general strike in Moscow, 720
— — programme of, 682
— — revolutionary policy of, in 1907, 735
— — schism amongst, 679
— reform, literature and, 435
"Socialism and the Political Struggle," 674
— growth of, 605
Socialist agitation, 631
— — failure of, 637
— — revival of, 681
— — strong methods of, 637
— propaganda, 625, 628
— — failure of, 635
— — revival of, 682
— propagandists, aims of, 629
— revolutionaries, 684
— — propaganda of, 721
— — terrorist policy of, 685
Socialists, 673
— repressive measures against, 629, 636
Society (*see* Social Classes *and* Classes)
— of Russian workmen, 695
Solovief, or Solovyov, Russian historian, 76
Solovyév's attack on the Tsar, 646
South Russian iron works, 662, 664
Southern Russia, industrial progress in, 662
— — variety of races in, 246
Spitsruten, barbarous punishment, 584
Spitzbergen, 119
Spring, rapidity of approach of, 102
Stáro-obriádtsi, Old Ritualists, 282, 290, 291, 708
State peasants, 112, 130
— — condition of, 475
— — numerical strength of, 475
Stenka Razin, Cossack rising under, 637, 673
Steppe the, 545, 746
— annexation of, 748
— colonisation of, 746
— foreign colonisation on, 246
— nomadic tribes of, 217, 221, 748, 752
— pastoral tribes of, 202, 232
— — — Tsars and, 235

Steppe, travelling on the, 246
Steward, history of a typical, 38
Stewards, 350
Stefánovitch, Socialist student, 638
Stolýpin, M., agrarian law of, 151
— as Prime Minister, 732
— assassination of, 742
— attempted assassination of, 741
— difficulties of, 740
— indicts Social Democrats of sedition, 736
— made Minister of the Interior, 725
— opposition of, to Communal system, 546
— policy of, 740
— programme of, 733
Strike, general political, recommended by Revolutionaries in 1905 711
Strikes after "Red Sunday," 704
— of 1894, 676
— of 1896, 678, 686
— of 1902, 680
— of 1905, 695
Students, reception of Nihilism by, 605, 608
Stundists, heretical sect, 267, 271
Sugar factory, 112
Supernumerary towns, 190
Supreme Court of Revision, 586
Svobódnaya Rossia, periodical, 653
Sweden, former expansion of, 750
Switzerland, Russian revolutionists in, 626, 674
Synod, 368
— tolerance of, 303
— Tsar and the 296

TALIENWAN leased to Russia, 763
Tarantass, description of, 17
Tariffs, prohibitive, 657
Tartar community, life in a, 208
— domination, 223
— horde, 747
— traders, 7
— villages, 152
Tartars, characteristics of, 225
— distinction between Mongols and, 223, 225
— education among, the 165
— fanaticism of learned, 165
— Kazan, 225
— language of, 226
— Nogaï, 220
— power of early, 743
— tolerance of unlearned, 165 (*see also* Mongols)
Taxation, 570
— before the eighteenth century, 186
Taxation, direct, 548
— indirect, 548
— of peasantry 469, 547
— of rural population by Peter the Great, 469
Taxes, Communal, abolition of responsibility for, 124
— — connected with land, 125
Tchaadáev, author, 435
Tchekhov, gun-maker, 656
Tcheremiss, Finnish tribe, 115
Tchernishevski, M., editor of *The Contemporary*, 609, 616
Tchigirin, Socialist agitator, 638
Tchin (rank), significance of, 376
Tchinóvniks, 355, 453
— term of reproach, 457
Territorial administration, 374
— expansion, 184
— — and foreign policy, 743
— — checked by Japanese War, 770
— — commercial considerations, 755
— — economic considerations in, 744
— — future, 757, 770
— — industrial considerations, 755
— — political aims and, 747
— — summary of influences, 756
Terrorism advocated by Revolutionaries, 639
— crimes of, 645
— failure of, 651
— in 1905, 19
— in Warsaw, 741
— repressive measures against, 646
Terrorist policy of Socialist-Revolutionaries, 685
Terrorists, 684
— Alexander II.'s attempt to conciliate, 647
— arrests of, 650
— assassination of Alexander II., by 649,
— attempts by, to assassinate Alexander II., 646
— attitude of Social Democrats towards, 686
— policy of, 646
Teutonic and Slav languages compared, 46
Theodosians, branch of Priestless People, 287
— monastery built by, at Moscow, 286
Thornton factory, strike at, 676
Three-field system of agriculture, 545
Tikhomirov, revolutionist, 651
"Tips" to officials, 380
Titles in Russia, unimportant, 377

Titles, value of, 320
Tolstoy, Count Dimitri, Minister, 623, 625
— — the late, 214
— — and the Dukhobortsi, 263
Torture in criminal investigations, 584
Town council, composition of, 191
Towns, causes of insignificance of, 185
— district, 190
— government, 189
— growth of, 183
— mercantile classes and, 182
— populations of, 183
— provincial, character of, 182
— scarcity of large, 183
— supernumerary, 190
— three kinds of, 189
Trade, effect of recent development, 184
— foreign statistics of, 553
— union organisations by the government, 687
Transcendental philosophy, 431
Trans-Siberian Railway, 760, 762
Travelling, 207
— by river, 4–10
— by road, 14, 17, 26
— impossible between summer and winter, 23
— improvement in railway, 1
— in the olden times, 16
— in winter, 21
— need for knowledge of language, 21
— requisites, 11, 20, 22
Trepov, General, 704
— — attempted assassination of, 599
Tribunals, regular, 586, 588, 596
Triennial system of agriculture, 101
Trubetskoi, Prince, presents Zemstvo address to Nicholas II., 709
Truvor, chieftain of Rūs tribe, 171
Tsaritsin, railway at, 7
Tsárkoe Seló, 701
Tsars and the Communes, 467
— and the noblesse, 466
— as Antichrist, 288, 289
— assume descent from Byzantine emperors, 307
— of Muscovy, administration of the, 371
— position of, in administrative system, 374
— relation of, to Synod and the Church, 296
— Romanov, 308
Turkey, and the Eastern Question, 758
Turkey, war with Russia, 753
Turks, power of the, in sixteenth century, 233
— Tsars of Muscovy and, 233
— Young, 758
Tver, nail-making at, 109

UKLEIN, founder of Molokánye sect, 263
Uloma, nail-making at, 109
Union for the Emancipation of the Working Classes, 677
— of Foreign Social Democrats, 679
— peasants', 724
"Union of Unions" formed to obtain national reforms, 707
Universities, restrictions removed from, 451
Ural, Cossacks of the, 237, 239

VAPOUR-BATHS, 32
Variag tribe, 171
Velikoruss, periodical, 609
Venetian artificers in Russia, 655
Viborg, cadets at, 731
Village assembly, 124, 546 (*see also* Commune)
— banks, 99
— community 120 (*see also* Commune)
— elder, 122, 123, 131
— — election of, 135
— life described, 101
— — effects of Emancipation upon, 530
— system, 120
Vladimir, Icon-painting in, 109
Vladimir, Grand Prince of Kiev, 751
Vladivostock, 1, 763, 764
— mutiny at, in 1905, 720
Volga, cholera on the, 85
— Cossacks of the, 237
— travelling on the, 4
Volkhov, river, 169, 173
Vologda, Bishop of, and persecution of priests, 299
Vólost Courts, territorial administration unit, 542
— — abuses of, 542
— elder of a, 541
Vólosts, institution of the, 508
Vorónezh, 646
Votiáks, 165

WANDERERS, religious sect, 289
Warsaw, growth of, 184
— terrorism in, 741
White Clergy, 60 (*see also* Clergy)

White, Mr. Arnold, and Jewish colonies, 253 (*note*)
— Sea, 119
Witchcraft and medicine, 81
Winter occupations, 105
Winter Palace, St. Petersburg, attempt to dynamite, 647
— — Father Gapon's procession to, 694, 698
—travelling, 21
Witte, Count, 688
— — advocates lenient treatment of revolutionaries, 713
— — Agrarian Conservatives and, 667
— — and the disorders of 1905–6, 723
— — and the labour troubles of 1896, 686
— — and the St. Petersburg strikers, 718
— — character of, 666
— — contrasted with M. Plehve, 669
— — gold currency introduced by, 663
— — honours for, 712
— — hostility to, 723
— — opinion of, on Gapon, 704
— — overthrow of, 665
— — policy of, 622, 713
— — resignation of, 725
— — rigorous measures of, 724
— — Slavophils and, 415
— — terminates peace negotiations with Japan, 712
Women field workers, 93, 101
— occupations of, in winter, 106
Wood-stealers, the, 105
Woollen industry, 657
Working classes in manufacturing districts, 111
— — legislation to improve conditions of, 686
— — Union for Emancipation of, 677
Workmen's associations, 92, 123, 687
— clubs, 704
— delegates, committee of, 720, 724

YAGUZHINSKI, COUNT, 310
Yamstchik, the, driver, 19
Yarmarki, decay of, 110
Yaroslav, Grand Prince, 367
Yaroslavl, province of, 167, 545
— — growth of, 183
— town, 202
Young Russia and Socialism, 627
— Turks, 758

ZAGÓSKIN, author, 431
Zaporovian Commonwealth, 236, 239
Zasulitch, Vera, 599
Zemlevoltsi, Socialist propagandists, 634
Zemstvo, The, 74, 85, 375
— agricultural improvement by the, 556
— and agriculture, 573
— bureaucracy and the, 566
— changes in the, 567
— complaints against, 570
— congresses of, 691, 709
— creation of, 558, 564
— depots established by, 556
— deterioration, 578
— duties of, 560
— establishment of, 621
— expenditure of, 569, 571
— future of, 579
— Imperial administration and the, 566
— improvements effected by, 568
— local self-government and, 558
— medical attendance provided by, 85
— Moscow, 575
— Novgorod, 574
— pedantry of, 574
Zemstvos, delegates of, approach government for a constitution, 691
— impoverishment of peasants, and, 537
— since the Emancipation, 541
Zhigulinskiya Gori, hills, 5
Zhukóvski, poet, 353, 431
Znakharka, a "witch-doctor," 81, 87
Zolotýkhin, Captain, assassination of, 653
Zubátov organises workmen's association, 687

PRINTED BY CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, LA BELLE SAUVAGE, LONDON, E.C.

00085342

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC

WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 15 October, 2018